MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Marion McKay

MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

BY LOUIS UNTERMEYER

POETRY

ROAST LEVIATHAN
CHALLENGE
THE NEW ADAM
THESE TIMES

PARODIES

INCLUDING HORACE
—AND OTHER POETS
HEAVENS

TALES

THE FAT OF THE CAT
AND OTHER STORIES

CRITICAL COLLECTIONS

MODERN AMERICAN POETRY
MODERN BRITISH POETRY
THIS SINGING WORLD
POEMS OF HEINRICH HEINE

MODERN AMERICAN POETRY: *A Critical Anthology*, *Edited by* LOUIS UNTERMEYER

THIRD REVISED EDITION

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A FOREWORD

To the Third Revised Edition

There are, we have been assured, nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays—"and every single one of them is right." And, although every critic seems eager to convince us that every single one of them is wrong, there are almost as many methods of making anthologies. In general, however, there are two results: the collection which is devoted to certain poets of a given time and the compilation which places its emphasis on the general poetry of the period. The one is necessarily particular and exclusive; the other and more inclusive type is likely to be less a detailed study and more a bird's-eye view of an era. The present anthology frankly belongs to the latter division; it endeavors to reflect the rise and fall of certain tendencies, the emergence of a score or so of outstanding figures, the changes in subject, idiom and taste of some three generations. Its chief purpose is to show, by the very variety of its inclusions, the range and diverse vigor of what, for lack of a more precise adjective, we call modern American poetry.

Yet, in spite of its inclusiveness, this collection is sure to displease many because of its omissions. This cannot be helped, nor could it be avoided even in a work of encyclopedic proportions. Concerning ourselves for the moment with living poets (and this volume is principally occupied with contemporary poetry), the reader may gain some idea of the mere quantity of verse produced in the United States when he learns that, during the past decade, there has been an annual average of five hundred volumes of poetry and drama. Besides this flood of actual books, there have been at various times since 1912, more than thirty

magazines devoted exclusively to the publishing of verse. Though the death-rate among these gallant *ephemeræ* has been rather high, there are, as I write, no less than fourteen poetry magazines still appearing, among which any critic of the recent renaissance will have to consider the veteran *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* (the first in the field), *The Measure,* which is to New York what Miss Monroe's monthly is to Chicago, *The Fugitive,* that sharper, more individualized organ of a group of young Southerners. Nor is this all. There is scarcely a general magazine published today that does not allot a generous portion of its pages to the poems of a surprisingly lyrical generation. The reader will realize, therefore, that were this volume to be expanded into a set twice the size of Mr. Braithwaite's hardy annual Anthologies of Magazine Verse, there would still be many a county outraged to find its own sweet singer among the missing. In the end every editor is driven back upon that mixture of prejudice, preference and intuition known as personal taste—and there seems no way of escaping the limitations imposed by one's temperament.

Fortunately, one can be more definite in regard to the other features of the volume. To begin with, there is the matter of arrangement. It might have been entertaining to divide the contents into distinct groups and schools. Unfortunately, such a scheme would have given impressions as false as they would have been contradictory. One should not attempt to ticket contemporary writers with conclusive labels, especially since so many of them are still developing. One cannot give a true picture of a period in the state of flux except by showing its fluid character. It has been the editor's aim to reflect this very flux and diversity. Since the chronological order is then, in spite of certain disadvantages, the most satisfactory one, an arbitrary boundary had to be fixed. The word "modern" as I have said elsewhere, is the most misleading adjective in the language. But there must be an arbitrary date—and, if possible, a reason for one. In the case of the companion volume,

Modern British Poetry, the year 1840 was made the dividing line because by that time the creative energy of the Victorians was ebbing, and because Thomas Hardy was born in that year. In the present volume the boundary has been moved back ten years; partly to give a wider background to the poetry of our own times, but chiefly to begin with the poetry of Emily Dickinson, whose pungent epithets and profound condensations, unprinted during her lifetime and unnoticed as late as 1890, have been enthusiastically revived by the most fervid apostles of modernity. This collection, therefore, takes up the poetry of "these states" since Whitman; for, between Whitman (born 1819) and Emily Dickinson (1830), there were no bards more important than the Cary sisters, Bayard Taylor and the finicking Richard Henry Stoddard.

Something has already been said concerning the inclusions, as well as the omissions. There are one or two amplifications to be added. Firstly, the fact that a poem has appeared in anthologies previous (or subsequent) to the first edition of this one has not prejudiced me against it. A good poem remains a good poem, no matter how often it is reprinted. On the other hand, it should be admitted that where the choice has been between a much quoted poem and one which has not been handed on from one anthologist to another, I have—where both poems were equally worthy—favored the less familiar example. Secondly, since this is a collection which attempts to chart a period, I have included various examples of those who have been dismissed as "mere experimenters," believing that experimentation is as vital a process of creation—and surely as significant a part of this age—as the unvarying acceptance of tradition. This same spirit has also impelled me to go to the other extreme—to reprint a small portion of that species which lies between light verse and authentic poetry, believing again that no survey of the period, no matter how casual, would be complete without the negro dialect of Irwin Russell and Paul Laurence Dunbar, the Hoosier accents of James Whitcomb

Riley, the light patter of Eugene Field, the ironic chuckles of Franklin P. Adams, the Italian-American patois of T. A. Daly. In this welter of broken syllables, we have fresh evidence that America has become a melting-pot in the poetic as well as the ethnic use of the term.

One thing remains to be added. Although the notes as well as the number of poems selected make the editor's preferences obvious, it must be made plain that he has attempted to make each poet's group representative. To accomplish this, not only the early but the most recent writing of the contemporaries appears here—some of it for the first time between covers. Wherever possible, the selections as well as the authors have been chronologically arranged; that is, the earlier work is placed at the beginning of each group, the later work following in approximately the order in which it was published. I (to discard the impersonal pronoun with relief) am greatly indebted to most of the living poets, not only for invaluable data, but for their collaborative assistance: many of the following pages embody their choice of their own poems as well as my preferences.

Finally, I am grateful to the many publishers who have, in every instance, displayed a spirit of generosity without which the successive editions of this volume would not have been possible. This indebtedness is alphabetically acknowledged to the following firms, as holders of the copyrights:

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MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

PREFACE

THE CIVIL WAR—AND AFTER

The end of the Civil War marked the end of a literary epoch. The New England group, containing (if Poe could be added) all the great names of the antebellum period, began to disintegrate. The poets had outsung themselves; it was a time of surrender and swan-songs. Unable to respond to the new forces of political nationalism and industrial reconstruction, the Brahmins (that famous group of intellectuals who had dominated literary America) withdrew into their libraries. Poets like Longfellow, Bryant, Taylor, turned their eyes away from the native scene, rhapsodized endlessly about Europe, echoed the "parlor poetry" of England, or left creative writing altogether and occupied themselves with translations. "They had been borne into an era in which they had no part," writes Fred Lewis Pattee (*A History of American Literature Since 1870*), "and they contented themselves with reëchoings of the old music." For them poetry ceased to be a reflection of actuality, "an extension of experience." Within a single period of six years, from 1867 to 1872, there appeared Longfellow's *Divina Commedia,* C. E. Norton's *Vita Nuova,* T. W. Parsons' *Inferno,* William Cullen Bryant's *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* and Bayard Taylor's *Faust.*

Suddenly the break came. America developed a national consciousness; the West discovered itself, and the East discovered the West. Grudgingly at first, the aristocratic leaders made way for a new expression; crude, jangling, vigorously democratic. The old order was changing with a vengeance. All the preceding writers—poets like Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Holmes—were not only products of the New Eng-

land colleges, but typically "Boston gentlemen of the early Renaissance." To them the new men must have seemed like a regiment recruited from the ranks of vulgarity. Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, John Hay, Joaquin Miller, Joel Chandler Harris, James Whitcomb Riley—these were men who had graduated from the farm, the frontier, the mine, the pilot-house, the printer's shop! For a while, the movement seemed of little consequence; the impact of Whitman and the Westerners was averted. The poets of the transition, with a deliberate art, ignored the surge of a spontaneous national expression. They were even successful in holding it back. But it was gathering force.

THE "POST-MORTEM" PERIOD

The nineteenth century, up to its last quarter, had been a period of new vistas and revolts: a period of protest and iconoclasm—the era of Shelley and Byron, the prophets of "liberty, equality and fraternity." It left no immediate heirs. In England, its successors by default were the lesser Victorians.[1] In America, the intensity and power of men like Emerson and Whittier gave way to the pale romanticism and polite banter of the transition, or, what might even more fittingly be called the "post-mortem" poets. "Much of our poetry," Thoreau wrote, "has the very best manners, but no character." For these interim lyrists were frankly the singers of an indefinite reaction, reminiscently digging among the bones of a long-dead past. They burrowed and borrowed, half archæologists, half artisans; impelled not so much by the need of creating poetry as by the desire to write it.

From 1866 to 1880 the United States was in a chaotic and frankly materialistic condition; it was full of political scandals, panics, frauds, malfeasance in high places. The moral fiber was flabby; the country was apathetic, corrupt and contented. As in all such periods of national unconcern, the artists turned from life altogether, preoccupying them-

[1] See *Modern British Poetry,* pages 4 and 5.

selves with the by-products of art: with method and technique, with elaborate and artificial conceits, with facile ideas rather than fundamental ideals.

Bayard Taylor, Thomas Buchanan Read, Richard Henry Stoddard, Paul Hamilton Hayne, Thomas Bailey Aldrich —all of these authors, in an effort to escape a reality they could not express and did not even wish to understand, fled to a more congenial realm of fantasy. They took the easiest routes to a prim and academic Arcadia, to a cloying and devitalized Orient or a mildly sensuous, treacle-dripping Greece. Their verse, confessing its own defeat, was choked with silk divans, Astrakhans, Vesuvian Bays, burning deserts, Assyrian temples, Spanish cloths of gold. In short, they followed wherever Keats, Shelley (in his lesser lyrics) and Tennyson seemed to lead them. However, not being explorers themselves, they ventured no further than their predecessors, but remained politely in the rear; repeating dulcetly what they had learned from their greater guides—pronouncing it with little variety but with a vast and sentimental unction. In their desperate preoccupation with lures and legends overseas, they were not, except for the accident of birth, American at all; all of them owed much more to old England than to New England.

WALT WHITMAN

Whitman, who was to influence future generations so profoundly in Europe as well as in America, had already appeared. The third edition of that stupendous volume, *Leaves of Grass,* had been printed in 1860. Almost immediately after, the publisher failed and the book passed out of public notice. But private scrutiny was keen. In 1865 a petty official discovered that Whitman was the author of the "notorious" *Leaves of Grass* and, in spite of his great sacrifices in nursing hundreds of wounded soldiers, in spite of his many past services and his present poverty, the offending poet was dismissed from his small clerkship in the Department of the Interior at Washington, D. C. Other reverses

followed rapidly. But Whitman, broken in health and cheated by his exploiters, lived to see not only a seventh edition of his great work published in 1881, but a complete collection printed in his seventy-third year (1892) in which the twelve poems of the experimental first edition had grown to nearly four hundred.

The influence of Whitman can scarcely be overestimated. It has touched every shore of letters, quickened every current of contemporary art. And yet, as late as 1900, Barrett Wendell in his *Literary History of America* could speak of Whitman's "eccentric insolence of phrase and temper," and, perturbed by the poet's increasing vogue across the Atlantic (Whitman had been hailed by men as eminent as Swinburne, Symonds, Rossetti), he was led to write such a preposterous sentence as "In temperament and style he was an exotic member of that sterile brotherhood which eagerly greeted him abroad."

Such a judgment would be impossible today. Whitman has been acclaimed by a great and growing public, not only here but in England, Germany, Russia, Italy and France. He has been hailed as prophet, as pioneer, as rebel, as fiery humanist and, most frequently, as liberator. He is, in spite of the rhetorical flourish, the Lincoln of our literature. The whole scheme of *Leaves of Grass* is inclusive rather than exclusive; its form is elemental, dynamic, free.

Nor was it only in the relatively minor matter of form that Whitman became our great poetic emancipator. He led the way toward a wider aspect of democracy; he took his readers out of fusty, lamp-lit libraries into the coarse sunlight and the buoyant air. He was, as Burroughs wrote, preëminently the poet of vista; his work had the power "to open doors and windows, to let down bars rather than to put them up, to dissolve forms, to escape narrow boundaries, to plant the reader on a hill rather than in a corner." He could do this because, first of all, he believed implicitly in life—in its physical as well as its spiritual manifestations; he sought to grasp existence as a whole, not rejecting the

things that, to other minds, had seemed trivial or tawdry. The cosmic and the commonplace were synonymous to him; he declared he was part of the most elemental, primitive things and constantly identified himself with them.

"What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest is Me."

And by "me" he meant not only himself but any man; Whitman's entire work, which has so often been misunderstood as the outpourings of egotism, was never so much a celebration of himself as a glorification of the ordinary man, "the divine average."

It was this breadth, this jubilant acceptance, that made Whitman so keen a lover of casual and ordinary things; he was the first of our poets to reveal "the glory of the commonplace." He transmuted, by the intensity of his emotion, material which had been hitherto regarded as too unpoetic for poetry. His long poem "Song of Myself" is a magnificent example. Here his "barbaric yawp," sounded "over the roofs of the world," is softened, time and again, to express a lyric ecstasy and naïf wonder.

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre of the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow, crunching with depressed head, surpasses any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels!

It is this large naturalism, this affection for all that is homely and of the soil, that sets Whitman apart from his fellow craftsmen as our first American poet. This blend of familiarity and grandeur, this racy but religious mysticism animates all his work. It swings with tremendous vigor through "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"; it sharpens the sturdy rhythms (and occasional rhymes) of the "Song of the Broad-

Axe"; it beats sonorously through "Drum-Taps"; it whispers immortally through the "Memories of President Lincoln" (particularly that magnificent threnody "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed"); it quickens the "Song of the Open Road" with what Tennyson called "the glory of going on," and lifts with a biblical solemnity his most famous "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking."

Whitman did not scorn the past; no one was quicker than he to see its wealth and glories. But most of the older flowerings belonged to their own era; they were foreign to our country—transplanted, they did not seem to flourish on this soil. What was original with many transatlantic poets was being merely aped by facile and unoriginal bards in these states; they seemed bent on transforming poetry into a pedant's stroll through Bulfinch's *Age of Fable*. Concerned only with the myths of other and older countries, they were blind to the living legends of their own. In his "Song of the Exposition" Whitman not only wrote his own *credo*, he uttered the manifesto of the new generation—especially in these lines:

Come, Muse, migrate from Greece and Ionia.
Cross out, please, those immensely overpaid accounts;
That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Æneas',
Odysseus' wanderings;
Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy
Parnassus. . . .
For know that a better, fresher, busier sphere, a wider, untried
domain awaits, demands you.

THE AWAKENING OF THE WEST

By 1870 the public had been surfeited with sugared conceits and fine-spun delicacies. For almost twelve years, Whitman had stormed at the squeamish overrefinements of the period, but comparatively few had listened. Yet an instinctive distaste for the prevailing affectations had been growing, and when the West began to express itself in the raw accents of Mark Twain and Bret Harte, the people turned to them with enthusiasm and no little relief. Mark Twain, a frus-

trated prose Whitman, revealed the romantic Mississippi and the vast mid-West; Bret Harte, beginning a new American fiction in 1868, ushered in the wild humor and wilder poetry of California. It is still a question whether Bret Harte or John Hay first discovered the literary importance of Pike County narratives. Twain was positive that Hay was the pioneer; documentary evidence points to Harte. But it is indisputable that Harte developed—and even overdeveloped—the possibilities of his backgrounds, whereas Hay, after a few brilliant ballads, reverted to his early poetic ideals and turned to the production of studied, polished and undistinguished verse. Lacking the tremendous gusto of Mark Twain or even the native accuracy of Hay, Bret Harte perfected a terse, dramatic idiom. Less exuberant than his compeers, he became more skilful in making his situations "effective"; he popularized dialect, sharpening his outlines and intensifying the power of his prose. Harte's was an influence that found its echo in the Hoosier stories of Edward Eggleston and made so vivid an impress on nineteenth-century literature.

To the loose swagger of the West, two other men added their diverse contributions. Edward Rowland Sill, cut short just as his work was gaining headway and strength, brought to it a gentle radicalism, a calm and cultured honesty; Joaquin Miller, rushing to the other extreme, theatricalized and exaggerated all he touched. He shouted platitudes at the top of his voice. His lines boomed with the pomposity of a brass band; floods, fires, hurricanes, extravagantly blazing sunsets, Amazonian women, the thunder of a herd of buffaloes—all were unmercifully piled up. And yet, even in its most blatant *fortissimos,* Miller's poetry occasionally captured the lavish grandeur of his surroundings, the splendor of the Sierras, the surge and spirit of the Western world.

Now that the leadership of letters had passed from the East, all parts of the country began to try their voices. The West continued to hold its rugged supremacy; the tradition of Harte and Hay was followed (softened and sentimental-

ized) by Eugene Field and James Whitcomb Riley. In the South, Irwin Russell was pioneering in negro dialect (1875), Sidney Lanier fashioned his intricate harmonies (1879), and Madison Cawein was beginning to create his tropical and overluxuriant lyrics. A few years later (in 1888) Russell brought out his faithfully-rendered *Dialect Poems* and the first phase of the American renascence had passed.

REACTION AND REVOLT IN THE '90S

The reaction set in at the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century. The passionate urge had spent itself, and in its place there remained nothing but that minor form of art which concerns itself less with creation than with re-creation. These re-creators wrote verse that was precise, scholarly and patently reproductive of their literary loves. "In 1890," writes Percy H. Boynton, "the poetry-reading world was chiefly conscious of the passing of its leading singers for the last half-century. It was a period when they were recalling Emerson's 'Terminus' and Longfellow's 'Ultima Thule,' Whittier's 'A Lifetime,' Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar,' and Browning's 'Asolando.'" . . . The poetry of this period (whether it is the hard chiseled verse of John B. Tabb or the ornate delicacy of Richard Watson Gilder) breathes a kind of moribund resignation; it is dead because it detached itself from the actual world, because it attempted to be a copied embellishment rather than an interpretation of life. But those who regarded poetry chiefly as a not too energetic indoor-exercise were not to rule unchallenged. Restlessness was in the air and revolt openly declared itself with the publication of *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894), *More Songs from Vagabondia* (1896) and *Last Songs from Vagabondia* (1900). No one could have been more surprised at the tremendous popularity of these care-free celebrations (the first of the three collections went through seven rapid editions) than the young authors, Richard Hovey and Bliss Carman. For theirs was a revolt without a program, a headlong flight to escape

—what? In the very first poem, Hovey voices their manifesto:

> Off with the fetters
> That chafe and restrain!
> Off with the chain!
> Here Art and Letters,
> Music and Wine
> And Myrtle and Wanda,
> The winsome witches,
> Blithely combine.
> Here is Golconda,
> Here are the Indies,
> Here we are free—
> Free as the wind is,
> Free as the sea,
> Free!

Free for what? one asks doggedly. Hovey does not answer directly, but with unflagging buoyancy, whipped up by scorn for the smug ones, he continues:

> I tell you that we,
> While you are smirking
> And lying and shirking
> Life's duty of duties,
> Honest sincerity,
> We are in verity
> Free!
> Free to rejoice
> In blisses and beauties!
> Free as the voice
> Of the wind as it passes!
> Free . . . *etc.*

Free, one concludes, to dwell with Music and Wine, Myrtle and Wanda, Art and Letters. Free, in short, to follow, with a more athletic energy, the same ideals as the parlor-poets they gibed so relentlessly. But the new insurgence triumphed. It was the heartiness, the gypsy jollity, the rush of high spirits that conquered. Readers of the *Vagabondia* books were swept along by their speed faster than by their philosophy.

The enthusiastic acceptance of these new apostles of outdoor vigor was, however, not as much of an accident as it seemed. On one side, the world of art, the public was wearied by barren philosophizing set to tinkling music; on the other, the world of action, it was faced by a staggering growth of materialism which it feared. Hovey, Carman and their imitators offered a swift and stirring way out. But it was neither an effectual nor a permanent escape. The war with Spain, the industrial turmoil, the growth of social consciousness and new ideas of responsibility made America look for fresh valuations, more searching songs. Hovey began to go deeper into himself and his age; in the mid-West, William Vaughn Moody grappled with the problems of his times only to have his work cut short by death in 1910. But these two were exceptions; in the main, it was another interval—two decades of appraisal and expectancy, of pause and preparation.

INTERIM—1890-1912

This interval of about twenty years was notable for its effort to treat the spirit of the times with a cheerful evasiveness, a humorous unconcern; its most representative craftsmen were, with four exceptions, the writers of light verse. These four exceptions were Richard Hovey, Bliss Carman, William Vaughn Moody and Edwin Markham. Both Hovey (in his *Along the Trail* and his modernization of *Launcelot and Guenevere,* a poetic drama in five books) and Carman (in his later poems) saw wider horizons and tuned their instruments to a larger music.

Moody's power was still greater. In "An Ode in Time of Hesitation," he protested against turning the "new-world victories into gain" and painted American idealism on a majestic canvas. In "The Quarry" he celebrated America's part in preventing the breaking-up of China by the greedy empires of Europe (an act accomplished by John Hay, poet and diplomat). In "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines," a dirge wrenched from the depths of his nature, Moody cried

out against our own grasping imperialists. It was the fufilment of this earlier poem which found its fierce climax in the lengthy Ode, with such lines as:

> Was it for this our fathers kept the law?
> This crown shall crown their struggle and their ruth?
> Are we the eagle nation Milton saw
> Mewing its mighty youth? . . .
> . . . . O ye who lead
> Take heed!
> Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will smite.

Early in 1899, the name of Edwin Markham flashed across the land when, out of San Francisco, rose the sonorous challenge of "The Man with the Hoe." This poem, which was once ecstatically called "the battle-cry of the next thousand years" (Joaquin Miller declared it contained "the whole Yosemite—the thunder, the might, the majesty"), caught up, with a prophetic vibrancy, the passion for social justice that was waiting to be intensified in poetry. Markham summed up and spiritualized the unrest that was in the air; in the figure of one man with a hoe, he drew a picture of men in the mines, men in the sweatshop, men working without joy, without hope. To social consciousness he added social conscience. In a ringing if rhetorical blank verse, Markham crystallized the expression of outrage, the heated ferment of the period. His was a vision of a new order, deriving its life-blood from the millions struggling in the depths.

Inspiring as these examples were, they did not generate others of their kind; the field lay fallow for more than a decade. The lull was pronounced, the gathering storm remained inaudible.

RENASCENCE—1913

Suddenly the "new" poetry burst upon us with unexpected vigor and extraordinary variety. Moody and Markham were its immediate forerunners; Whitman its spiritual godfather. October, 1912, saw the first issue of *Poetry: A*

Magazine of Verse, a monthly that was to introduce the work of hitherto unknown poets and to herald, with an eager impartiality, the various groups, schools and "movements." The magazine came at the very moment before the breaking of the storm. Flashes and rumblings had already been troubling the literary heavens; a few months later came—the deluge! For three years the skies continued to discharge such strange and divergent phenomena as Vachel Lindsay's *General William Booth Enters into Heaven* (1913), James Oppenheim's *Songs for the New Age* (1914), the first anthology of *The Imagists* (1914), *Challenge* (1914), Amy Lowell's *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914), Lindsay's *The Congo and Other Poems* (1914), Robert Frost's *North of Boston* (1914), Edgar Lee Master's *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), John Gould Fletcher's *Irradiations* (1915), Carl Sandburg's *Chicago Poems* (1916). By 1917, the "new" poetry was ranked as "America's first national art"; its success was sweeping, its sales unprecedented. People who never before had read verse, turned to it and found they could not only read but relish it. They discovered that for the enjoyment of poetry it was not necessary to have at their elbows a dictionary of rare words and classical references; they no longer were required to be acquainted with Latin legendry and the minor love-affairs of the lesser Greek divinities. Life was their glossary, not literature. The new work spoke to them in their own language. And it did more: it spoke to them of what they had scarcely ever heard expressed; it was not only closer to their soil but nearer to their souls.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

One reason why the new poetry achieved so sudden a success was its freedom from the traditionally stilted "poetic diction." Revolting strongly against the assumption that poetry must have a vocabulary of its own, the poets of the new era spoke in the oldest and most stirring tongue; they used a language that was the language not of the poetasters

but of the people. In the tones of ordinary speech they rediscovered the strength, the dignity, the divine core of the commonplace.

Edwin Arlington Robinson had already been employing the sharp epithet, the direct and clarifying utterance which was to become part of our present technique. As early as 1897, in *The Children of the Night,* Robinson anticipated the brief characterizations and etched outlines of Masters' *Spoon River Anthology;* he stressed the psychological element with unerring artistry and sureness of touch. His sympathetic studies of men whose lives were, from a worldly standpoint, failures were a sharp reaction to the current high valuation on financial achievements, ruthless efficiency and success at any cost. Ahead of his period, he had to wait until 1916, when a public prepared for him by the awakened interest in native poetry discovered *The Man Against the Sky* (1916) and the richness of Robinson at the same time. Since that time Robinson's audience has grown in direct proportion to the increased power of his work; the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry has been twice awarded to him, and there is no longer any doubt as to the permanence of his contribution to American literature.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Frost and Masters were the bright particular planets of 1915, although the star of the latter has waned while the light of the former has grown in magnitude. Yet Masters' most famous book will rank as one of the landmarks of current literature. In it, he has synthesized the small towns of the mid-West with a background that is unmistakably local and with implications that are universal. This amazing volume, in its curiosity and comprehensiveness, is a broad cross-section of whole communities. Beneath its surface tales and dramas, its condensation of grocery-store gossip, *Spoon River Anthology* is a great part of America in microcosm.

The success of the volume was sensational. It was

actually one of the season's "best sellers"; in a few months, it went into edition after edition. People forgot Masters' revelation of the sordid cheats and hypocrisies, his arraignment of dirty politics and dirtier chicanery, in their interest at seeing their neighbors so pitilessly exposed. Yet had Masters dwelt only on the drab disillusion of the village, had he (as he was constantly in danger of doing) overemphasized the morbid and sensual episodes, he would have left only a spectacular and poorly-balanced work. But the book ascends to a definite exaltation and ends on a plane of half-victorious idealism. In its wide gamut, *Spoon River,* rising from its narrow origins, reaches epical proportions. Indigenous to its roots, it is stark, unflinching, unforgettable.

ROBERT FROST

The same year that brought forth *Spoon River Anthology* saw the American edition of Frost's *North of Boston.* It was evident at once that the true poet of New England had arrived. Unlike his predecessors, Frost was never a poetic provincial—never parochial in the sense of America still being a literary parish of England. Frost is as native as the lonely farmhouses, the dusty blueberries, the isolated people, the dried-up brooks and mountain intervals that he describes. Loving, above everything else, the beauty of the Fact, he shares, with Robinson and Masters, the determination to tell not merely the actual but the factual truth. But Frost, a less disillusioned though a more saddened poet, wears his rue and his realism with a difference. Where Robinson is definite, Frost diverges, going roundabout and, in his speculative wandering, covering a wider territory of thought. Where Masters is violent and hotly scornful, Frost is reticent and quietly sympathetic. Again where Masters, viewing the mêlée above the struggle, writes *about* his characters, Frost is *of* the people. Where Robinson, in his more racy and reminiscent moods, often reflects New England, Frost *is* New England.

North of Boston is well described by the poet's own sub-

title: "a book of people." In it one not only sees a countryside of people making the intricate pattern of their lives, one catches them thinking out loud, one can hear the very tones of their voices. Here we have speech so arranged and translated that the speaker is heard on the printed page; any reader will be led by the kind and color of these words into reproducing the changing accents in which they are supposed to be uttered. It is this insistence that "all poetry is the reproduction of the tones of actual speech" that gives these poems, as well as the later lyrics, a quickly-communicated emotional appeal. It endows them with the deepest power of which words are capable—the power to transmit significant sounds. These sounds, let in from the vernacular, are full of a robust, creative energy; they seem made of the blood and bones of the people they represent.

But Frost is by no means the dark naturalist that many suspect. Behind the mask of "grimness" which many of his critics have fastened upon him, there is a continual elfin pucker; a whimsical smile, a half-disclosed raillery glints beneath his most somber monologues. His most concrete facts are symbols of spiritual values; through his very reticence as well as through his revelations one hears much more than the voice of New England.

CARL SANDBURG

Just so, the great mid-West, that vast region of steel mills and slaughter-houses, of cornfields and prairies, of crowded cities and empty skies, speaks through Carl Sandburg. In Sandburg, industrial America has found its voice: *Chicago Poems* (1916), *Cornhuskers* (1918), *Smoke and Steel* (1920) vibrate with the immense purring of dynamos, the swishing rhythms of threshing arms, the gossip and laughter of construction gangs, the gigantic and tireless energy of the modern machine. Frankly indebted to Whitman, Sandburg's poems are less sweeping but more varied; musically his lines mark a great advance. He sounds the extremes of the gamut: there are few poems in our language more violent

than "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter," few lyrics as hushed and tender as "Cool Tombs."

Like Frost, Sandburg is true to *things*. But Frost is content with the inexhaustible fact and its spiritual implications; he never hopes to drain it all. Sandburg also feeds on the fact, but it does not satisfy him. He has strange hungers; he hunts eagerly for the question behind, the answer beyond. The actual scene, to him, is a point of vivid and abrupt departure. Reality, far from being the earth on which he dwells, is, for Sandburg, the ground he touches before rising; realism acts merely as a springboard from which this poet dives into a romantic mysticism. His later work, in fact, is almost too full of gnomic gestures.

When *Chicago Poems* first appeared, it was received with a disfavor ranging from hesitant patronization to the scornful jeers of the academicians. Sandburg was accused of verbal anarchy; of a failure to distinguish prose matter from poetic material; of uncouthness, vulgarity, of assaults on the English language and a score of other crimes. In the face of those who still see only a coarseness and distorted veritism in Sandburg, it cannot be said too often that he is brutal only when dealing with brutal things; that his "vulgarity" springs from an immense love of life, not from a merely decorative part of it; that his bitterest invectives are the result of a healthy disgust of shams; that, behind the force of his projectile-phrases, there leaps the greater flame of his pity. In every instance the strength of his hatred is exceeded by the challenge of his love.

THE IMAGISTS AND AMY LOWELL

Sandburg established himself as the most daring user of American words—rude words ranging from the racy metaphors of the soil to the slang of the street. But even before this, the possibilities of a new vocabulary were being tested. As early as 1865, Whitman was saying, "We must have new words, new potentialities of speech—an American range of self-expression. . . . The new times, the new people need

a tongue according, yes, and what is more, they will have such a tongue—will not be satisfied until it is evolved."

It is curious to think that one of the most effective agents to fulfil Whitman's prophecy and free modern poetry from its mouldering diction was that little band of preoccupied specialists, the Imagists. They were, for all their preciosity and occasional extravagances, prophets of freedom—liberators in the sense that their programs, pronouncements and propaganda compelled even their most dogged adversaries to acknowledge the integrity of their aims. Their restatement of old truths was one of the things which helped the new poetry out of a bog of rhetorical rubbish.

Ezra Pound was the first to gather the insurgents into a definite group. During the winter of 1913, he collected a number of poems illustrating the Imagist point of view and had them printed in a volume: *Des Imagistes* (1914). A little later Pound withdrew from the clan. The rather queerly assorted group began to disintegrate and Amy Lowell, then in England, brought the best of the younger members together in three yearly anthologies (*Some Imagist Poets*) which appeared in 1915, 1916 and 1917. There were, in Miss Lowell's new grouping, three Englishmen (D. H. Lawrence, Richard Aldington, F. S. Flint), three Americans (H. D., John Gould Fletcher, Amy Lowell), and their creed, summed up in six statements, was as follows:

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the *exact* word, not the merely decorative word.
2. To create new rhythms—as the expression of new moods. We do not insist upon "free-verse" as the only method of writing poetry. . . . We do believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free verse than in conventional forms.
3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject.
4. To present an image (hence the name: "Imagist"). We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous.

5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred or indefinite.

6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is the very essence of poetry.

It does not seem possible that these six obvious and almost platitudinous principles, which, incidentally, the Imagists often neglected in their poetry, could have evoked the storm of argument, fury and downright vilification that broke as soon as the militant Miss Lowell began to champion them. Far from being revolutionary, these principles were not new; they were not even thought so by their sponsors. The Imagists themselves realized that they were merely restating ideals which had fallen into desuetude, and declared, "They are the essentials of all great poetry, indeed of all great literature." And yet many conservative critics, joined by the one hundred per cent reactionaries, rushed wildly to combat these "heresies"! They forgot that, in trying to protect the future from such lawlessness as "using the exact word," from allowing "freedom in the choice of subject," from the importance of "concentration," they were actually attacking the highest traditions of their enshrined past.

The controversy succeeded in doing even more than the work of the Imagists themselves. H. D. removed herself from controversies and took up her residence in Switzerland, perfecting her delicate and exquisitely finished designs. John Gould Fletcher, a more vacillating expatriate, remained in London and continued to strengthen his gift though shifting his standards; his later and richer work is in almost flat opposition to the early pronouncements. Miss Lowell was left to carry on the battle single-handed; to defend the theories which, in practice, she was beginning to violate brilliantly. By all odds, the most energetic and unflagging experimenter, the late Miss Lowell's versatility became amazing. It will be several years before her services to American literature can be fully reckoned and appraised. She wielded a controversial cudgel with one hand and,

with the other, she wrote Chaucerian stanzas, polyphonic prose, monologs in her native New England dialect, irregular *vers libre,* conservative couplets, translations from the French, echoes from the Japanese, even primitive re-creations of Indian folk-lore!

The work of the Imagists was done. Its members began to develop themselves by themselves. They had helped to swell the tide of realistic and romantic naturalism—a tide of which their contribution was merely one wave, a high breaker that carried its impact far inshore.

THE FREE VERSE FURORE

One of the tenets of the Imagists (the belief that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free verse than in conventional forms) spread further than all the other articles of their faith. The ease of its fulfilment even more than its apparent truth led hundreds who were not, in any sense, Imagist poets to adopt *vers libre* as their medium. The result was an inundation of footless—and often headless—writing; the little which was incisive and original was lost in heavy floods of merely loquacious "shredded prose." For fully six years there was produced an incalculable quantity of tiresome exhibitionism. Most of this verse was frankly bad. But so, the defenders of *vers libre* might well object, are most sonnets. The fact, however, remains that the original exponents of free verse began to look with distrust on the dubious accomplishments of their camp-followers. H. D.'s chiseled lines, Amy Lowell's enameled pictures, Edgar Lee Masters' brusque epitaphs remain splendid examples of their genre. Other writers gave this amorphous medium a certain shapeliness: John Gould Fletcher based his symphonic effects on a free sweep and cadence instead of metre, Maxwell Bodenheim forced unions of unhappy nouns and pitiless adjectives without benefit of rhyme and formal ritual; Alfred Kreymborg perfected a type of staccato whimsy in which no definite beat was perceptible.

But the poets themselves, partly because of the wish to change, partly to show that they were not bound by a theory, began to turn back to orthodox patterns.

Today we find Amy Lowell's last work to be largely in formal verse; her later productions include not only actual ballads but rely greatly on the steady pace of iambics. Bodenheim and Fletcher are employing more symmetrical structures, the latter is actually aiming at the packed simplicities of Blake. Masters is working almost entirely in blank verse. H. D., who was not only the one perfect Imagist but the surest artisan in unrhymed cadence, has achieved delicate effects in interwoven rhyme. And Kreymborg, who surpassed them all in metrical eccentricities, Kreymborg, whose lines were so brittle and elusive that melodic comments (performed by the poet on his famous mandolute) were required to fill out the elisions, has turned to the creation of straightforward sonnets and to even simpler couplets.

To what can we attribute the return of the prodigal *vers libertine?* To a reversion to orthodox type? Or a revulsion from mere novelty of expression? It seems more likely that, having passed through various phases of experimentation, these poets, like all other workers, desire to crystallize their idiom in some lasting shape. The chief fault with free verse is that it yields too easily; and what the creator enjoys most of all is a stubborn, even a resisting form. The poet—and this statement, like all generalities, bristles with exceptions—likes to feel the limits of his verse just as the painter learns to appreciate the confines of his canvas.

NEW AND OLD FOLK RHYTHMS

In a country that has not been mellowed by antiquity, that has not possessed songs for its peasantry or traditions for its singers, one cannot look for a wealth of folk stuff. In such a country—the United States, to be specific—what folk-poetry there is has followed the path of the pioneer. At first these homely songs were merely adaptations and localized

versions of English ballads and border minstrelsy, of which the *Lonesome Tunes* discovered in the Kentucky mountains by Howard Brockway and Loraine Wyman are excellent examples. But later, a more definitely native spirit found expression in the various sections of these states. In the West (during the seventies) Bret Harte and John Hay celebrated, in their own accents, the rough miners, ranchers, steamboat pilots, the supposed descendants of the emigrants from Pike County, Missouri. In the Middle West the desire for local color and music led to the popularity of James Whitcomb Riley's Hoosier ballads and the spirited jingles of Eugene Field. In the South the inspiration of the negro spirituals and antebellum songs was utilized to excellent effect by Irwin Russell, Joel Chandler Harris and, later, by Paul Laurence Dunbar.

Since the days of Dunbar, the Negro has made great strides in self-expression; the impress of his spontaneity is evidenced in a great portion of the art of the day. American music—classical as well as popular—has benefited from the strong insistence of African drums and the syncopated shuffling of the feet of slaves. Jazz itself has become glorified; today the intelligentsia practically claim it as their own! In sociology the Negro, through men like W. E. Burghardt Du Bois and Benjamin Brawley, has become his own analyst. In poetry the results are still mixed and uneven. But it is apparent that the Negro is beginning to free himself, not only from a sentimentality designed to please the whites, but from an attitude which was not so much race-conscious as self-conscious. Of the spirituals which preceded the Civil War, he does not echo the soft wish-fulfilment of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, Comin' for to Carry Me Home"; his spirit, grown sterner, reflects the more courageous strength of "Let My People Go" and "Gwine to Shine All Over God's Heaven!"

Although it is too early for final estimates, no résumé of the period could fail to recognize the work of James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay, Alex Rogers and, most significant

of all the Aframerican group, the young and variously gifted Countée Cullen.

The Indian, a more ancient primitive, has been as difficult to adopt poetically as he has been to assimilate ethnically. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that the white and red races are worlds apart in sentiment, philosophy, and attitudes to life, many gallant attempts have been made to bring the spirit of the Indian into our literature. The late Natalie Curtis Burlin did excellent pioneering work in *The Indian's Book;* Mary Austin, in spite of a far-fetched theory and unsound conclusions, has made an extended study of the matter in *The American Rhythm;* and *The Path On the Rainbow,* edited by George W. Cronyn in 1918, is, by all odds, the best collection on the subject available to the public. Among the individual workers in the field, other than those mentioned, special praise must be given to Constance Lindsay Skinner, Alice Corbin Henderson, and Lew Sarett. Of these, Sarett has been the most successful in capturing the fluid combination of dance, tune, ejaculation, and occasional vivid phrase which we so loosely call the poetry of the North American Indian.

In the West today there is a revival of interest in backwoods melodies and folk-created verse. John A. Lomax has published two volumes of cowboy songs—most of them anonymous—full of tang, wild fancy and robust humor. The tradition of Harte and Hay is being carried on by such racy interpreters as Harry Herbert Knibbs, Badger Clark and Edwin Ford Piper. The Kentucky Mountain region is being interpreted by Elizabeth Madox Roberts and Roy Helton. The "white South" has found expression through John Crowe Ransom, DuBose Heyward and Hervey Allen. But, of all contemporaries who approximate the spirit of folk-poetry, none has made more striking or more indubitably American contributions than Vachel Lindsay of Springfield, Illinois.

LINDSAY AND OPPENHEIM

Lindsay is essentially a people's poet. He does not hesitate to express himself in terms of the lowest common denominator; his fingers are alternately on his pen and the public pulse. Living near enough to the South to appreciate the Negroes' qualities without wishing to theatricalize them, Lindsay has been tremendously influenced by the colorful suggestions, the fantastic superstitions, the revivalistic gusto, the half-savage Christianity and, above all, by the curiously syncopated music that once characterized the black man in America. In "The Congo," "John Brown" and the less extended but equally remarkable "Simon Legree," the words roll with the solemnity of an exhortation, dance with a grotesque fervor or snap, crackle, and leap with all the humorous rhythms of a piece of "ragtime." Lindsay catches the burly color and boisterous music of camp-meetings, minstrel shows, revival jubilees. He seems to be an itinerant evangelist preaching the Gospel through a saxophone.

And Lindsay does more. He carries his democratic determinations further than any of his *confrères*. His dream is of a great communal Art; he insists that all villages should be centers of beauty, all its citizens, artists. At heart a missionary even more than a minstrel, Lindsay often loses himself in his own doctrines. Worse, he frequently cheapens himself and caricatures his own gift by pandering to the vaudeville instinct that insists on putting a noisy "punch" into everything, regardless of taste, artistry or a sense of proportion. He is most impressive when he is least frenetic, when he is purely fantastic (as in "The Ghosts of the Buffaloes," the shorter fancies, the series of metaphorical poems about the moon) or when a greater theme and a finer restraint unite (as in "The Eagle That Is Forgotten") to create a preaching that does not cease to be poetry.

Something of the same blend of prophet and poet is found in the work of James Oppenheim. Oppenheim is a throwback to the ancient Hebrew singers; the music of the Psalms

rolls through his lines, the fire of Isaiah kindles his spirit. This poetry, with its obvious reminders of Whitman, is biblical in its inflection, Oriental in its heat; it runs through forgotten centuries and brings buried Asia to busy America. It carries to the Western world the color of the East, adding the gift of prophecy to pragmatic purpose. In books like *War and Laughter* and *Songs for the New Age* the race of god-breakers and god-makers speaks with a new voice; here, with analytic intensity, the old iconoclasm and still older worship are again united.

THE LYRIC NOTE

Recent though the renascence has been, it has already a lyric significance which no other period can equal. Although every season swells the list of native singers, none has surpassed the subtle if sometimes crepuscular music of Conrad Aiken, the devious but strongly accented airs of John Crowe Ransom, the galloping fancies of William Rose Benet, the leaping if not always controlled lyricism of John Hall Wheelock. This list of lyric writers might well have been headed by Robert Frost, had not Frost already been considered in a previous section.

The work of the women, in quantity as well as variety, has excelled that of most of the male minnesingers. Two influences—both American—are already evident: Emily Dickinson and Lizette Woodworth Reese. The epigrammatic condensations of the former have tempted many of the lyric poets still further back, even to the tortured beauties of Donne, Marvel and Webster. The straightforward speech and sparse imagery of Miss Reese has won an entire regiment of writers away from the ornate and primping love songs of the type enshrined by Rufus W. Griswold in his *Gems From American Female Poets,* an invaluable side light on what the "female poet" felt she ought to write in 1842.

Prophesying about contemporaries is a hazardous occupation. Yet I think it safe to say that not much of the work of this period will outlast "Renascence" and half a dozen

other poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay, certain of the unsentimental love songs of Sara Teasdale and several of the brilliant clarities of Elinor Wylie. And it seems unlikely that anthologists of the future, choosing among the two score latter-day Sapphos who have published volumes of no little merit, will allow their readers to forget the three leading lyricists already mentioned as well as the names of Adelaide Crapsey, Hazel Hall, Louise Bogan, Elizabeth J. Coatsworth, Genevieve Taggard, Winifred Welles, Léonie Adams, and Jean Starr Untermeyer.

THE NEW SPIRIT

The new poets have won their audience not only by their actual accomplishments but by their differences. Nothing is more stimulating in contemporary American poetry than its range. For the first time in the history of our literature there is a body of verse which is panoramic rather than parochial. Few of the poets belong to any one school or tendency; they are, differing widely from most of their English fellow-craftsmen, far less hampered by the burdens of tradition or the necessity of casting them off. In such a collection as this there is little evidence of either the placid acceptance of old routines or revolt for the mere sake of revolting. Never has there been such catholicity, such variety of thought and gesture. All forms are being used—new ones are even being invented. Both in the conventional and in the experimental modes, America has become a literary melting-pot in every sense. The very variety of subject matter is in striking opposition to the thin, limited products of the transition poet. Geographically, the range is no less wide. New England is no longer the one literary center; there is scarcely a village which cannot boast a local laureate. As the country has matured, the poets have grown with it, springing up in the most unlikely places, ready to celebrate the urban miracles of stone and steel as well as the gaunt prairie silences.

It is as if submerged springs had suddenly burst through

arid soil; instead of one placid stream, there are a dozen rushing currents, a score of impetuous freshets.

SUMMARY

It is a happy circumstance that this volume should begin with Emily Dickinson. For here is a forerunner of the new spirit—free in expression, unhampered in choice of subject, penetrative in psychology—to which a countryful of writers has responded.

Most of the poets represented in these pages have found a fresh and vigorous material in a world of honest and often harsh reality. They respond to the spirit of their times. They have learned to distinguish beauty from mere prettiness; to wring loveliness out of squalor; to search for hidden truths even in the dark caves of the unconscious.

And with the use of the material of everyday life, there has come a further simplification: the use of the language of everyday speech. The stilted and mouth-filling phrases have been practically discarded in favor of words that are part of our daily vocabulary. It would be hard at present to find a representative poet employing such awkward and outworn contractions as *'twixt, 'mongst, ope';* such evidences of poor padding as *adown, did go, doth smile;* such dull rubber-stamps (*clichés* is the French term) as *heavenly blue, roseate glow, golden hope, girlish grace, gentle breeze,* etc. The *peradventures, forsooths* and *mayhaps* have disappeared.

As the speech of the modern poet has grown less elaborate, so have the patterns that embody it. Not necessarily discarding rhyme, regular rhythm or any of the musical assets of the older poets, the forms have grown simpler; the intricate versification has given way to lines that reflect and suggest the tones of animated and even exalted speech. The result of this has been a great gain both in sincerity and in intensity; the present-day poet can dwell with richer detail on the matter instead of the manner.

One could go into minute particulars concerning the growth of an American spirit in our literature and point out

how many of the latter-day poets have responded to native forces larger than their backgrounds. Such a course would be endless and unprofitable. It is pertinent, however, to observe that, young as this nation is, it is already being supplied with the stuff of legends, ballads and even epics. The modern singer has turned to celebrate his own locality, his indigenous folk-tales. It is particularly interesting to observe how the figure of Lincoln has been treated by the best of our living poets. I have accordingly included seven Lincoln poems by seven writers, each differing in manner, technique and point of view.

For the rest, I leave the casual reader, as well as the student, to discover the awakened vigor and energy in this, one of the few great poetic periods in American literature. With the realization that this gathering is not so much a summary as an introduction, it is hoped that, in spite of its limitations, this collection will draw the reader on to a closer consideration of the poets here included—even to those omitted. The purpose of such an anthology must always be to stimulate an interest rather than to satisfy a curiosity. Such, at least, is the hope and aim of one editor.

L. U.

June, 1925.
New York City.

Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson, one of the most original intelligences and possibly the greatest woman poet of modern times, was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, December 10, 1830. She was a physical as well as a spiritual hermit, actually spending most of her life without setting foot beyond her doorstep. She wrote her short, introspective verses without thought of publication, and it was not until 1890, four years after her death, that the first volume of her posthumous poetry appeared with an introduction by Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

"She habitually concealed her mind, like her person, from all but a very few friends," writes Higginson, "and it was with great difficulty that she was persuaded to print, during her lifetime, three or four poems." Yet she wrote almost five hundred of these direct and spontaneous illuminations, sending many of them in letters to friends, or (written on chance slips of paper and delivered without further comment) to her sister Sue. Slowly the peculiar Blake-like quality of her thought won a small circle of readers; *Poems* (1890) was followed by *Poems—Second Series* (1892) and *Poems—Third Series* (1896), the contents being collected and edited by her two friends, Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Mabel Loomis Todd. Several years later, a further generous volume was assembled by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, entitled *The Single Hound* (1914)—all of the new poems (to which Mrs. Bianchi wrote a preface of great personal value) being a record of Emily Dickinson's romantic friendship for her sister.

Although her chief poems were published in the 'Nineties and although the recent revival of interest in poetry drew attention to the peculiar individuality of Emily Dickinson's expression, her readers remained few. An occasional article appeared, showing her "lack of control" or, beneath a cover of condescension, ridiculing her "hit-or-miss grammar, sterile rhythms, and appalling rhymes." A devotee here and there defended the quaint charm of her use of assonance and half-rhyming vowels. Her audience grew but gradually. Suddenly, without warning, she leaped into

international prominence. Almost forty years after her death, her name became a poetic shibboleth. The year 1924 saw the publication of Martha Dickinson Bianchi's important volume, *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson,* the first collected *Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (published by Little, Brown and Company) and the first English compilation, *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson,* edited with a splendid prefatory essay by Conrad Aiken.

The enthusiasm attending the triple appearance was unbounded. Martin Armstrong, the English poet, said in a review, "Mr. Aiken calls Emily Dickinson's poetry 'perhaps the finest by a woman in the English language.' I quarrel only with his 'perhaps.'" Nor were the other plaudits less vociferous. "A feminine Blake," "an epigrammatic Walt Whitman," "a New England mystic," were a few of the characterizations fastened upon her. Other appraisals sought to "interpret" her involved but seldom obscure verses in the light of the "mystery" of her life. It is no secret that Emily Dickinson fell in love with a man already married, that she renounced her love, and withdrew from the world. (The poem entitled "The Soul Selects" is an evidently autobiographical commentary.) But "The Amherst Nun" would have repudiated the amateur psychoanalysts as vigorously as she, whose verses and letters brim with mischievous fancy, would have laughed at the grandiloquent epithets.

That her work will last longer than the work of the majority of her—or our—generation is, I think, indubitable. That it is sometimes erratic, half-done and, thrown off with no thought of publication, in need of the finisher's file is also, I believe, self-evident. But, in the greater number of the poems, the leap of thought is so daring, the gaps so thrilling, that moments which, in a lesser spirit, would have turned to pretty or audacious conceits become startling snatches of revelation. Is it a flippancy or an anguished cry when, robbed by Life, she stands "a beggar before the door of God," and confronts Him with "Burglar, banker, father!" Is it anything less than Olympian satire when, asking God to accept "the supreme iniquity," she declares:

> We apologize to Thee
> For Thine own duplicity.

Her gnomic imagery is tremendous in implication and the range is far greater than a first reading reveals. Although the poet often

indulges herself by retreating into a style which is not so much cryptic as wayward, her tiny quatrains are lavish with huge ideas and almost overpowering figures. She speaks of music as "the silver strife"; she sees the railway train "lap the miles and lick the valleys up"; she speaks ironically of splitting the lark to find the music "bulb after bulb in silver rolled"; she pictures the humming-bird "a resonance of emerald"; she glimpses evening "the house-wife in the west" sweeping the sunset "with many colored brooms"; she asks "who laid the rainbow piers." Pondering on the power of words, she meditates:

> Could mortal lip divine
> The undeveloped freight
> Of a delivered syllable,
> 'Twould crumble with the weight.

She wrote chiefly of four things: Love, Nature, Life, Death. But what immensities were sounded within this gamut! Her prose—by which I mean those letters which, luckily against her will, have been preserved—contains the same homely combination of irreverence and ecstasy. All the definitions of poetry fail to give us the very breath of the matter which Emily Dickinson evoked in an impromptu scribble:

> "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know it is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know this is poetry. These are the only ways I know it."

Her technique was as variable as her mood. Her genius—But Conrad Aiken has summed up her contradictions with enviable clarity. His finale is (with Mrs. Bianchi's comprehensive *Life*) the best introduction to Emily Dickinson that has been written. "Her disregard," writes Aiken, "for accepted forms or for regularities was incorrigible. Grammar, rhyme, metre,—anything went by the board if it stood in the way of thought or freedom of utterance. Sometimes this arrogance was justified; sometimes not. . . . Once adjust oneself to the spinsterly angularity of the mode, its lack of eloquence or rhetorical speed, its naïve and often prosaic directness, one discovers felicities of thought and phrase on every page. The magic is terse and sure. And ultimately one simply

sighs at Miss Dickinson's singular perversity, her lapses and tyrannies, and accepts them as an inevitable part of the strange and original genius she was. The lapses and tyrannies become a positive charm—one even suspects they were deliberate."

In 1884 she was stricken, as her father before her, with paralysis. Two years later, on May 16, 1886, this woman with "the soul of a monk of the Middle Ages bound up in the flesh of a Puritan" died, after a life bare of outward adventure, at Amherst. Few were present at the funeral; fewer still dreamed that she would outlive the obituary in the *Springfield Republican.* Today her place is secure; her work is definitely

Of the colossal substance
Of immortality.

A BOOK

There is no frigate like a book
  To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
  Of prancing poetry.
This traverse may the poorest take
  Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
  That bears a human soul!

INEBRIATE OF AIR

I taste a liquor never brewed,
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol!

Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue.

When landlords turn the drunken bee
Out of the foxglove's door,
When butterflies renounce their drams,
I shall but drink the more!

Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,
And saints to windows run,
To see the little tippler
Leaning against the sun!

SUSPENSE

Elysium is as far as to
The very nearest room,
If in that room a friend await
Felicity or doom.

What fortitude the soul contains,
That it can so endure
The accent of a coming foot,
The opening of a door.

CHARTLESS

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet now I know how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in Heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

INDIAN SUMMER

These are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June,—
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that can not cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

BEAUTY AND TRUTH

I died for beauty, but was scarce
Adjusted in the tomb,
When one who died for truth was lain
In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?
"For beauty," I replied.
"And I for truth,—the two are one;
We brethren are," he said.

And so, as kinsmen met a night,
We talked between the rooms,
Until the moss had reached our lips
And covered up our names.

MYSTERIES

The murmur of a bee
A witchcraft yieldeth me.
If any ask me why,
'Twere easier to die
Than tell.

The red upon the hill
Taketh away my will;
If anybody sneer,
Take care, for God is here,
That's all.

The breaking of the day
Addeth to my degree;
If any ask me how,
Artist, who drew me so,
Must tell!

THE RAILWAY TRAIN

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop—docile and omnipotent—
At its own stable door.

BECLOUDED

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

THE SOUL SELECTS

The soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariots pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

BEFORE THE DOOR OF GOD

I never lost as much but twice,
And that was in the sod;
Twice have I stood a beggar
Before the door of God!

Angels, twice descending,
Reimbursed my store.
Burglar, banker, father,
I am poor once more!

A CEMETERY

This quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies,
And Lads and Girls;
Was laughter and ability and sighing,
And frocks and curls.
This passive place a Summer's nimble mansion,
Where Bloom and Bees
Fulfilled their Oriental Circuit,
Then ceased like these.

LAST DIRECTIONS

Ample make this bed,
Make this bed with awe;
In it wait till judgment break
Excellent and fair.

Be its mattress straight,
Be its pillow round;
Let no sunrise' yellow noise
Interrupt this ground.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich was born November 11, 1836, at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he spent most of the sixteen years which he has recorded in that delightful memoir, *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1869). After a brief clerkship, he became junior literary critic of *The Evening Mirror* at nineteen, publishing his first book (*The Bells*), an immature collection of echoes, at the same time. From 1855 to 1866 he held various journalistic positions, associating himself with the leading metropolitan *literati*. Nathaniel Willis, Bayard Taylor, Edmund Clarence Stedman, William Winter were his intimates, and their influence reinforced the inherent artificiality of Aldrich's tastes. Abetted by his associates he chose the "flicker rather than the flame"; he praised Stedman but despised Whitman, he worshiped Longfellow and belittled Poe, imitated Willis and could see nothing in Emily Dickinson except her "infelicities."

But though Aldrich mingled with the New York group, he was not part of it; he longed for the more rarefied intellectual atmosphere of New England and when, in 1866, Osgood offered him the editorship of *Every Saturday,* published in Boston, Aldrich accepted with alacrity. A few years later he became editor of the famous *Atlantic Monthly,* holding that position from 1881 to 1890. In the meanwhile *The Ballad of Babie Bell* (1858), an incredibly banal and insincere piece of work, and *Pampinea and Other Poems* (1861) had appeared, bearing practically no relation to his times. Other volumes followed; *Complete Poems* being first issued in 1882, though in 1898 Aldrich made a comprehensive revision of all the poems he cared to preserve.

Aldrich's work falls into two sharply-divided classes. The first half is full of overloaded phrase-making, fervid extravagances. The reader sinks beneath clouds of damask, azure, emerald, pearl and gold; he is drowned in a sea of musk, aloes, tiger-lilies, spice, soft music, orchids, attar-breathing dusks. There is no real air in these verses; it is Nature as conceived by a poet reading the Arabian Nights in a hot-house. In company with Stoddard and Taylor, Aldrich dwelt in a literary Orientalism (Stoddard's *Book of the East* followed fast upon Taylor's *Poems of the Orient*) and Aldrich's *Cloth of Gold* was suffused with similar "vanilla-flavored adjectives and patchouli-scented participles" (to quote Holmes), laboring hard to create an exotic atmosphere by a wearisome pro-

fusion of lotus blossoms, sandalwood, spikenard, blown roses and diaphanous gauzes.

The second phase of Aldrich's art is more human in appeal as it is surer in artistry. He learned to sharpen his images, to fashion his smallest lyrics with a well-bred *finesse*. "In the little steel engravings that are the best expressions of his peculiar talent," writes Percy H. Boynton, "there is a fine simplicity; but it is the simplicity of an accomplished woman of the world rather than of a village maid." Although Aldrich bitterly resented the charge that he was a maker of tiny perfections, a carver of cherry-stones, those poems of his which have the best chance of permanence are some of the epigrams, the short lyrics and a few of the sonnets, passionless in tone but exquisite in design.

The best of Aldrich's diffuse poetry has been collected in an inclusive Household Edition, published by Houghton Mifflin Company. He died in 1907.

MEMORY

My mind lets go a thousand things,
Like dates of wars and deaths of kings,
And yet recalls the very hour—
'Twas noon by yonder village tower,
And on the last blue noon in May—
The wind came briskly up this way,
Crisping the brook beside the road;
Then, pausing here, set down its load
Of pine-scents, and shook listlessly
Two petals from that wild-rose tree.

"ENAMORED ARCHITECT OF AIRY RHYME"

Enamored architect of airy rhyme,
Build as thou wilt, heed not what each man says.
Good souls, but innocent of dreamers' ways,
Will come, and marvel why thou wastest time;

Others, beholding how thy turrets climb
'Twixt theirs and heaven, will hate thee all thy days;
But most beware of those who come to praise.
O Wondersmith, O worker in sublime
And heaven-sent dreams, let art be all in all;
Build as thou wilt, unspoiled by praise or blame,
Build as thou wilt, and as thy light is given;
Then, if at last the airy structure fall,
Dissolve, and vanish—take thyself no shame.
They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.

IDENTITY

Somewhere—in desolate wind-swept space—
In Twilight-land—in No-man's land—
Two hurrying Shapes met face to face,
And bade each other stand.

"And who are you?" cried one agape,
Shuddering in the gloaming light.
"I know not," said the second Shape,
"I only died last night!"

REALISM

Romance beside his unstrung lute
Lies stricken mute.
The old-time fire, the antique grace,
You will not find them anywhere.
To-day we breathe a commonplace,
Polemic, scientific air:
We strip Illusion of her veil;
We vivisect the nightingale
To probe the secret of his note.
The Muse in alien ways remote
Goes wandering.

John Hay was born October 8, 1838, in Salem, Indiana, graduated from Brown University in 1858 and was admitted to the Illinois bar a few years later. At nineteen, when he went back to Warsaw, the little Mississippi town where he had lived as a boy, he dreamed only of being a poet—a poet, it must be added, of the pleasantly conventional, transition type. But the Civil War was to disturb his mild fantasies. He went to the front and saw active service under General Hunter. He became private secretary to Lincoln, then major and assistant adjutant-general under General Gilmore, then a colonel by brevet, then secretary of the Legation at Paris, *chargé d'affaires* at Vienna and Secretary of Legation at Madrid.

His few vivid *Pike County Ballads* came more as a happy accident than as a deliberate creative effort. When Hay returned from Spain in 1870, bringing with him his *Castilian Days,* he still had visions of becoming an orthodox lyric poet. But he found everyone reading Bret Harte's short stories and the new expression of the rude West. (See Preface.) He speculated upon the possibility of doing something similar, translating the characters into poetry. The result was the six racy ballads in a vein utterly different from everything Hay wrote before or after. The poet-politician seems to have regarded this series somewhat in the nature of light, extempore verse, belonging to a far lower plane than his serious publications; he talked about them reluctantly, he even hoped that these "diversions" would be forgotten. It is difficult to say whether this regret grew because Hay, loving the refinements of culture, at heart hated any suggestion of vulgarity, or because of a basic lack of courage—Hay having published his novel of labor unrest in the early 80's (*The Breadwinners*) anonymously, refusing to acknowledge his authorship.

The fact remains, his rhymes of Pike County have survived all his more classical lines. They served for a time as a fresh influence; they remain a creative accomplishment.

Hay was in politics all the later part of his life, ranking as one of the most brilliant Secretaries of State the country has ever had. Under President Hayes he was ambassador to Great Britain. In collaboration with J. G. Nicolay he wrote the most authoritative Life of Lincoln of the period, a biography which has been unequalled until Carl Sandburg's two volumes. He died in 1905.

JIM BLUDSO

OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE

Wall, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
  Becase he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
  Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
  That you haven't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
  The night of the Prairie Belle?

He warn't no saint,—them engineers
  Is all pretty much alike,—
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
  And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
  And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied,—
  I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had:
  To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
  To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,
  A thousand times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
  Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
  And her day come at last,—
The Movastar was a better boat,
  But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.

And so she came tearin' along that night—
The oldest craft on the line—
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clar'd the bar,
And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned and made
For that willer-bank on the right.
Thar was runnin' and cussin', but Jim yelled out,
Over all the infernal roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell,—
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He warn't no saint,—but at jedgement
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a-goin' to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

BANTY TIM

(*Remarks of Sergeant Tilmon Joy to the White Man's Committee of Spunky Point, Illinois*)

I reckon I git your drift, gents,—
  You 'low the boy sha'n't stay;
This is a white man's country;
  You're Dimocrats, you say;
And whereas, and seein', and wherefore,
  The times bein' all out o' j'int,
The nigger has got to mosey
  From the limits o' Spunky P'int!

Let's reason the thing a minute:
  I'm an old-fashioned Dimocrat too,
Though I laid my politics out o' the way
  For to keep till the war was through.
But I come back here, allowin'
  To vote as I used to do,
Though it gravels me like the devil to train
  Along o' sich fools as you.

Now dog my cats ef I kin see,
  In all the light of the day,
What you've got to do with the question
  Ef Tim shill go or stay.
And furder than that I give notice,
  Ef one of you tetches the boy,
He kin check his trunks to a warmer clime
  Than he'll find in Illanoy.

Why, blame your hearts, jest hear me!
  You know that ungodly day
When our left struck Vicksburg Heights, how ripped
  And torn and tattered we lay.

When the rest retreated I stayed behind,
  Fur reasons sufficient to me,—
With a rib caved in, and a leg on a strike,
  I sprawled on that damned glacee.

Lord! how the hot sun went for us,
  And br'iled and blistered and burned!
How the Rebel bullets whizzed round us
  When a cuss in his death-grip turned!
Till along toward dusk I seen a thing
  I couldn't believe for a spell:
That nigger—that Tim—was a-crawlin' to me
  Through that fire-proof, gilt-edged hell!

The Rebels seen him as quick as me,
  And the bullets buzzed like bees;
But he jumped for me, and shouldered me,
  Though a shot brought him once to his knees;
But he staggered up, and packed me off,
  With a dozen stumbles and falls,
Till safe in our lines he drapped us both,
  His black hide riddled with balls.

So, my gentle gazelles, thar's my answer,
  And here stays Banty Tim:
He trumped Death's ace for me that day,
  And I'm not goin' back on him!
You may rezoloot till the cows come home,
  But ef one of you tetches the boy,
He'll wrastle his hash to-night in hell,
  Or my name's not Tilmon Joy!

Bret Harte

Francis Bret Harte was born August 25, 1839, at Albany, New York. (In certain quarters doubt is thrown on the date of his birth. One or two sources maintain that a compositor, upsetting a

6, made the "correct" date, 1836, "wrongly" 1839. However, practically all of the encyclopedias and biographies agree upon 1839 as the correct date.) His childhood was spent in various cities of the East. Late in 1853 his widowed mother went to California with a party of relatives, and two months later, when he was fifteen, Bret Harte and his sister followed. He dreamed even at this age of being a poet. During the next few years he was engaged in school-teaching, typesetting, politics, mining and journalism, becoming editor of *The Overland Monthly* in San Francisco in 1868.

Harte's fame came suddenly. Late in the sixties he had written a burlesque in rhyme of two Western gamblers trying to fleece a guileless Chinaman who claimed to know nothing about cards but who, it turned out, was scarcely as innocent as he appeared. Harte, in the midst of writing serious poetry, had put the verses aside as too crude and trifling for publication. Some time later, just as *The Overland Monthly* was going to press, it was discovered that the form was one page short. Having nothing else on hand, Harte had these rhymes set up. Instead of passing unnoticed, the poem was quoted everywhere; it swept the West and captivated the East. When *The Luck of Roaring Camp* followed, Harte became not only a national but an international figure. England acclaimed him and *The Atlantic Monthly* paid him $10,000 to write for a year in his Pike County vein.

East and West Poems appeared in 1871; in 1872 he published an enlarged *Poetical Works* including many earlier pieces. His scores of short stories represent Harte at his best; "M'liss," "Tennessee's Partner," "The Outcast of Poker Flat"—these are the work of a lesser, transplanted Dickens. His novels (*Maruja* was published in 1885) are of minor importance; they are carelessly constructed, theatrically conceived; his characters are little more than badly-wired marionettes that betray every movement made by their manipulator.

His serious poetry has many of the faults of his prose. A melodramatic crudeness alternates with an equally exaggerated sentimentalism; even those verses not in dialect (like "What the Bullet Sang") suffer from their defects of emphasis. But the occasional verse will remain to delight readers who will rarely glance at Harte's other work except for documentation.

In 1872 Harte, encouraged by his success, returned to his native

East; in 1878 he went to Germany as consul at Crefeld. Two years later he was transferred to Scotland and, after five years there, went to London, where he remained the rest of his life. Harte's later period remains mysteriously shrouded. He never came back to America, not even for a visit; he ceased to correspond with his family; he separated himself from all the most intimate associations of his early life. He died, suddenly, at Camberley, England, May 6, 1902.

"JIM"

Say there! P'r'aps
Some on you chaps
  Might know Jim Wild?
Well,—no offense:
Thar ain't no sense
  In gittin' riled!

Jim was my chum
  Up on the Bar:
That's why I come
  Down from up yar,
Lookin' for Jim.
Thank ye, sir! *You*
Ain't of that crew,—
  Blest if you are!

Money? Not much:
  That ain't my kind;
I ain't no such.
  Rum? I don't mind,
Seein' it's you.

Well, this yer Jim,—
Did you know him?
Jes' 'bout your size;
Same kind of eyes;—

Well, that is strange:
  Why, it's two year
  Since he came here,
Sick, for a change.

Well, here's to us:
    Eh?
The h—— you say!
    Dead?
That little cuss?

What makes you star',
You over thar?
Can't a man drop
's glass in yer shop
But you must r'ar?
  It wouldn't take
  D——d much to break
You and your bar.

    Dead!
Poor—little—Jim!
Why, thar was me,
Jones, and Bob Lee,
Harry and Ben,—
No-account men:
Then to take *him!*

Well, thar—Good-by.
No more, sir—I—
    Eh?
What's that you say?
Why, dern it!—sho!—
No? Yes! By Joe!
    Sold!
Sold! Why, you limb.
You ornery,
  Derned, old,
Long-legged Jim.

PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES

(*Table Mountain, 1870*)

Which I wish to remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
And I shall not deny,
In regard to the same,
What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand:
It was Euchre. The same
He did not understand;
But he smiled as he sat by the table,
With a smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
At the state of Nye's sleeve,
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
Were quite frightful to see,—
Till at last he put down a right bower,
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me!

Then I looked up at Nye,
And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor,"—
And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
In the game "he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
He has twenty-four packs,—
Which was coming it strong,
Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapers,—that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,—
Which the same I am free to maintain.

WHAT THE BULLET SANG

O joy of creation,
To be!
O rapture, to fly
And be free!
Be the battle lost or won,
Though the smoke shall hide the sun,
I shall find my love, the one
Born for me!

I shall know him where he stands
All alone,
With the power in his hands
Not o'erthrown;
I shall know him by his face,
By his godlike front and grace;
I shall hold him for a space
All my own!

It is he—O my love!
So bold!
It is I—all thy love
Foretold!
It is I—O love, what bliss!
Dost thou answer to my kiss?
O sweetheart! what is this
Lieth there so cold?

Joaquin Miller

Joaquin Miller was, as he desired to be, a mysterious figure. The date of his birth is conjectural; even his name is a matter of doubt. However, from recent evidence—and particularly the researches of Frank R. Reade, who has made an extensive study of the matter—it seems safe to say that his name was originally

Cincinnatus Hiner Miller: Cincinnatus, according to his brother, George Melvin Miller, "for a certain Roman General (!) and mother named him Hiner for Dr. Hiner, who brought him into the world." Although Joaquin Miller claimed that his middle name was "Heine" and that his mother named him Heine because of her love for the German poet, there is almost positive proof that Miller adopted the Heine *after* he had heard of the famous author of *Buch der Lieder*. The date of his birth is equally unsure. March tenth seems to be the favored day assigned to his entry into the world and, although 1839 has been advanced as the latest "definite" date, most biographers choose 1841 as the year in which Miller was born.

A few facts are indisputable. Miller was of mixed Dutch and Scotch stock—not, as has been asserted, of immigrant parents—his father's father having been killed at Fort Meigs in the War of 1812. As Miller himself wrote (and this particular bit of biography has stood the scrutiny of his more exact commentators), "My cradle was a covered wagon, pointed west. I was born in a covered wagon, I am told, at or about the time it crossed the line dividing Indiana from Ohio." When Miller was twelve, his family left the mid-West with "two big heavily laden wagons, with eight yoke of oxen to each, a carriage and two horses for mother and baby sister, and a single horse for the three boys to ride." The distance covered in their cross-country exodus (they took a roundabout route to Oregon) was nearly three thousand miles. The time consumed, he records, "was seven months and five days. There were no bridges, no railroad levels, nothing of the sort. . . . Many times, at night, after ascending a stream to find a ford, we could look back and see our smouldering campfires of the day before." This journey made a lasting impression on the boy's impressionable mind; it was this tortuous wandering that gave Miller his reverence for the spaciousness and glory of the West in general and the pioneer in particular. After two years in the Oregon home, he ran away to find gold.

At fifteen we find Miller living with the Indians as one of them; in 1859 (at the age of eighteen) he attends a mission-school "college" in Eugene, Oregon; between 1860 and 1865 he is express-messenger, editor of a pacifist newspaper that is suppressed for opposing the Civil War, lawyer and, occasionally, a poet. He holds a minor judgeship from 1866 to 1870.

His first book (*Specimens*) appears in 1868, his second (*Joaquin et al.,* from which he took his name) in 1869. No response—not even from "the bards of San Francisco Bay" to whom he had dedicated the latter volume. He is chagrined, discouraged, angry. He resolves to quit America, to go to the land that has always been the nursing-ground of poets. "Three months later, September 1, 1870, I was kneeling at the grave of Burns. I really expected to die there in the land of my fathers." He arrives in London, unheralded, unknown. He takes his manuscripts to one publisher after another with the same negative result. Finally, with a pioneer desperation, he prints privately one hundred copies of his *Pacific Poems,* sending them out for review. Sensation! The reversal of Miller's fortunes is one of the most startling in all literature. He becomes famous overnight. He is fêted, lauded, lionized; he is ranked as an equal of Browning, given a dinner by the Pre-Raphaelites, acclaimed as "the great interpreter of America," "the Byron of Oregon!"

His dramatic success in England is easily explained. He brought to the calm air of literary London, a breath of the great winds of the plain. The more he exaggerated his crashing effects, the louder he roared, the better the English public liked it. When he entered Victorian parlors in his velvet jacket, hip-boots and flowing hair, childhood visions of the "wild and woolly Westerner" were realized and the very bombast of his work was glorified as "typically American."

And yet, for all his overstressed muscularity, Miller is strangely lacking in creative energy. His whipped-up rhetoric cannot disguise the essential weakness of his verse. It is, in spite of a certain breeziness and a few magnificent descriptions of cañons and mountain-chains, feeble as well as false, full of cheap heroics, atrocious taste and impossible men and women. (See Preface.) One or two individual poems, like "Crossing the Plains," "The Yukon," and parts of his apostrophes to the Sierras, the Pacific Ocean and the Missouri River may live; the rest seem doomed to extinction.

From 1872 to 1876 Miller travelled in Europe and the Holy Land; and, although he speaks of being in Egypt in 1879, there is good ground for believing this to be another romantic exaggeration. At all events, he built a log cabin in Washington in 1883, after spending some time in Boston and New York. After being

married for the third time, he returned to California in 1885. In 1886 he bought "The Hights," worked with Harr Wagner on the "Golden Era," and tried to found an experimental Greek Academy for aspiring writers. He died there, after a determinedly picturesque life, in sight of the Golden Gate in 1913.

BY THE PACIFIC OCEAN [1]

Here room and kingly silence keep
Companionship in state austere;
The dignity of death is here,
The large, lone vastness of the deep.
Here toil has pitched his camp to rest:
The west is banked against the west.

Above yon gleaming skies of gold
One lone imperial peak is seen;
While gathered at his feet in green
Ten thousand foresters are told.
And all so still! so still the air
That duty drops the web of care.

Beneath the sunset's golden sheaves
The awful deep walks with the deep,
Where silent sea-doves slip and sweep,
And commerce keeps her loom and weaves.
The dead red men refuse to rest;
Their ghosts illume my lurid West.

CROSSING THE PLAINS [1]

What great yoked brutes with briskets low,
With wrinkled necks like buffalo,
With round, brown, liquid, pleading eyes,
That turn'd so slow and sad to you,

[1] Permission to reprint this poem was granted by the Harr Wagner Publishing Co., San Francisco, California, publishers of *Joaquin Miller's Complete Poetical Works.*

That shone like love's eyes soft with tears,
That seem'd to plead, and make replies,
The while they bow'd their necks and drew
The creaking load; and looked at you.
Their sable briskets swept the ground,
Their cloven feet kept solemn sound.

Two sullen bullocks led the line,
Their great eyes shining bright like wine;
Two sullen captive kings were they,
That had in time held herds at bay,
And even now they crush'd the sod
With stolid sense of majesty,
And stately stepp'd and stately trod,
As if 'twere something still to be
Kings even in captivity.

FROM "BYRON"

In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot,
I do not dare to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.

THE ARCTIC MOON [1]

(*From "The Yukon"*)

The moon resumed all heaven now,
She shepherded the stars below
Along her wide, white steeps of snow,
Nor stooped nor rested, where or how.

[1] Permission to reprint this poem was granted by the Harr Wagner Publishing Co., San Francisco, California, publishers of *Joaquin Miller's Complete Poetical Works.*

She bared her full white breast, she dared
The sun to show his face again.
She seemed to know no change, she kept
Carousal constantly, nor slept,
Nor turned aside a breath, nor spared
The fearful meaning, the mad pain,
The weary eyes, the poor dazed brain,
That came at last to feel, to see
The dread, dead touch of lunacy.

How loud the silence! Oh, how loud!
How more than beautiful the shroud
Of dead Light in the moon-mad north
When great torch-tipping stars stand forth
Above the black, slow-moving pall
As at some fearful funeral!

The moon blares as mad trumpets blare
To marshalled warriors long and loud;
The cobalt blue knows not a cloud,
But, oh, beware that moon, beware
Her ghostly, graveyard, moon-mad stare!

Beware white silence more than white!
Beware the five-horned starry rune;
Beware the groaning gorge below;
Beware the wide, white world of snow,
Where trees hang white as hooded nun—
No thing not white, not one, not one!
But most beware that mad white moon.

Edward Rowland Sill

Edward Rowland Sill was born at Windsor, Connecticut, in 1841. In 1861 he was graduated from Yale and shortly thereafter his poor health compelled him to go West. After various unsuccessful experiments, he drifted into teaching, first in the high

schools in Ohio, later in the English department of the University of California. His uncertain physical condition added to his mental uncertainty. Unable to ally himself either with the lethargic, conservative forces whom he hated or with the radicals whom he distrusted, Sill became an uncomfortable solitary; half rebellious, half resigned. During the last decade of his life, his brooding seriousness was less pronounced, a lighter irony took the place of his dark reflections. Although Sill remains among the minor poets both in scope and style, a few of his poems (such as "Opportunity") have established themselves securely; they will keep Sill's name alive for many years.

The Hermitage, his first volume, was published in 1867, a later edition (including later poems) appearing in 1889. His two posthumous books are *Poems* (1887) and *Hermione and Other Poems* (1899). A volume of his prose "essays in literature and education" was published in 1900.

Sill died, after bringing something of the Eastern culture to the West, in 1887.

OPPORTUNITY

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel—
That blue blade that the king's son bears,—but this
Blunt thing—!" he snapt, and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

SOLITUDE

All alone—alone,
Calm, as on a kingly throne,
Take thy place in the crowded land,
Self-centred in free self-command.
Let thy manhood leave behind
The narrow ways of the lesser mind:
What to thee are its little cares,
The feeble love or the spite it bears?

Let the noisy crowd go by:
In thy lonely watch on high,
Far from the chattering tongues of men,
Sitting above their call or ken,
Free from links of manner and form
Thou shalt learn of the wingèd storm—
God shall speak to thee out of the sky.

DARE YOU?

Doubting Thomas and loving John,
Behind the others walking on:—

"Tell me now, John, dare you be
One of the minority?
To be lonely in your thought,
Never visited nor sought,
Shunned with secret shrug, to go
Thro' the world, esteemed its foe:
To be singled out and hissed,
Pointed at as one unblessed,
Warned against in whispers faint,
Lest the children catch a taint;

To bear off your titles well,—
Heretic and infidel?
If you dare, come now with me,
Fearless, confident, and free."

"Thomas, do you dare to be
Of the great majority?
To be only, as the rest,
With Heaven's creature comforts blessed;
To accept, in humble part,
Truth that shines on every heart;
Never to be set on high,
Where the envious curses fly;
Never name or fame to find,
Still outstripped in soul and mind;
To be hid, unless to God,
As one grass-blade in the sod,
Underfoot with millions trod?
If you dare, come with us, be
Lost in love's great unity.

Sidney Lanier

Sidney Lanier was born at Macon, Georgia, February 3, 1842. His was a family of musicians (Lanier himself was a skilful performer on various instruments), and it is not surprising that his verse emphasizes—even overstresses—the influence of music on poetry. He attended Oglethorpe College, graduating at the age of eighteen (1860), and, a year later, volunteered as a private in the Confederate army. After several months' imprisonment (he had been captured while acting as signal officer on a blockade-runner), Lanier was released in February, 1865, returning from Point Lookout to Georgia on foot, accompanied only by his flute, from which he refused to be separated. His physical health, never the most robust, had been frightfully impaired by his incarceration, and he was already suffering from tuberculosis, the rest of his life being spent in an unequal struggle against it.

He was now only twenty-three years old and the problem of choosing a vocation was complicated by his marriage in 1867. He spent five years in the study and practice of law, during which time he wrote comparatively little verse. But the law could not hold him; he felt premonitions of death and realized he must devote his talents to art before it was too late. He was fortunate enough to obtain a position as flautist with the Peabody Symphony Orchestra in 1873 in Baltimore, where he had free access to the music and literature he craved. Here he wrote all of his best poetry. In 1879, he was made lecturer on English in Johns Hopkins University, and it was for his courses there that he wrote his chief prose work, a brilliant if not conclusive study, *The Science of English Verse*. Besides his poetry, he wrote several books for boys, the two most popular being *The Boy's Froissart* (1878) and *The Boy's King Arthur* (1880).

Lanier's poetry, charming though most of it is, suffers from his all too frequent theorizing, his too-conscious effort to bring verse over into the province of pure music. He thought almost entirely, even in his most intellectual conceptions, in terms of musical form. His main theory that English verse has for its essential basis not *accent* but a strict musical *quantity* is a wholly erroneous conclusion, possible only to one who could write "whatever turn I have for art is purely musical—poetry being with me a mere tangent into which I shoot." Lanier is at his best in his ballads, although a few of his lyrics have a similar spontaneity. In spite of the fact that he had rather novel schemes of rhythm and stanza-structure, much of his work is marred by strained effects, elaborate conceits and a kind of verse that approaches mere pattern-making. But such a vigorous ballad as "The Song of the Chattahoochee," lyrics like "Night and Day" and "The Stirrup Cup," and parts of the symphonic "Hymns of the Marshes" are sure of a place in American literature. Never a great figure, he was one of the most interesting and spiritual of our minor poets.

The most comprehensive collection of Lanier's verse was first issued in 1906: *Collected Poems of Sidney Lanier*, edited by his wife, with a memorial by William Hayes Ward. It includes not only the poet's well-known musical experiments, but the rarely printed dialect verses and all that remains of "The Jacquerie."

Lanier died, a victim of his disease, in the mountains of North Carolina, September 7, 1881.

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE[1]

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide,*
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay,*
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide,*
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

[1] From *Poems of Sidney Lanier.* Copyright, 1884, 1891, 1916, by Mary D. Lanier; published by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
—Crystals clear or acloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst—
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call—
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

NIGHT AND DAY[1]

The innocent, sweet Day is dead.
Dark Night hath slain her in her bed.
O, Moors are as fierce to kill as to wed!
—Put out the light, said he.

A sweeter light than ever rayed
From star of heaven or eye of maid
Has vanished in the unknown Shade
—She's dead, she's dead, said he.

[1] From *Poems of Sidney Lanier*. Copyright, 1884, 1891, 1916, by Mary D. Lanier; published by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

Now, in a wild, sad after-mood
The tawny Night sits still to brood
Upon the dawn-time when he wooed
—I would she lived, said he.

Star-memories of happier times,
Of loving deeds and lovers' rhymes,
Throng forth in silvery pantomimes.
—Come back, O Day! said he.

FROM "THE MARSHES OF GLYNN"[1]

Inward and outward to northward and southward the beach-lines linger and curl
As a silver-wrought garment clings to and follows the firm sweet limbs of a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!
A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main.

. . . . . .

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!

[1] From *Poems of Sidney Lanier*. Copyright, 1884, 1891, 1916, by Mary D. Lanier; published by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide in his ecstasy.
The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and breadth of the marvellous marshes of Glynn.

Charles Edward Carryl

Charles Edward Carryl, father of Guy Wetmore Carryl (see page 182), was born in New York City, December 30, 1842. He was an officer and director in various railroads but found leisure to write two of the few worthy rivals of the immortal *Alice in Wonderland.* These two, *Davy and the Goblin* (1884), which has gone through twenty printings, and *The Admiral's Caravan* (1891), contain many lively and diverting ballads. But the best of the elder Carryl is neither his twinkling prose nor his semi-narrative stanzas but the mock monologues and the inspired nonsense verses in the manner of Lewis Carroll who, due to the slight difference in spelling, is sometimes confused with him.

C. E. Carryl lived the greater part of his life in New York, but on retiring from business, removed to Boston and lived there until his death, which occurred in the summer of 1920.

THE PLAINT OF THE CAMEL

"Canary-birds feed on sugar and seed,
Parrots have crackers to crunch;
And as for the poodles, they tell me the noodles
Have chickens and cream for their lunch.

But there's never a question
About MY digestion—
ANYTHING does for me!

"Cats, you're aware, can repose in a chair,
Chickens can roost upon rails;
Puppies are able to sleep in a stable,
And oysters can slumber in pails.
But no one supposes
A poor Camel dozes—
ANY PLACE does for me!

"Lambs are enclosed where it's never exposed,
Coops are constructed for hens;
Kittens are treated to houses well heated,
And pigs are protected by pens.
But a Camel comes handy
Wherever it's sandy—
ANYWHERE does for me!

"People would laugh if you rode a giraffe,
Or mounted the back of an ox;
It's nobody's habit to ride on a rabbit,
Or try to bestraddle a fox.
But as for a Camel, he's
Ridden by families—
ANY LOAD does for me!

"A snake is as round as a hole in the ground;
Weasels are wavy and sleek;
And no alligator could ever be straighter
Than lizards that live in a creek.
But a Camel's all lumpy
And bumpy and humpy—
ANY SHAPE does for me!"

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S STORY

The night was thick and hazy
When the "Piccadilly Daisy"
Carried down the crew and captain in the sea;
And I think the water drowned 'em;
For they never, never found 'em
And I know they didn't come ashore with me.

Oh! 'twas very sad and lonely
When I found myself the only
Population on this cultivated shore;
But I've made a little tavern
In a rocky little cavern,
And I sit and watch for people at the door.

I spent no time in looking
For a girl to do my cooking,
As I'm quite a clever hand at making stews;
But I had that fellow Friday,
Just to keep the tavern tidy,
And to put a Sunday polish on my shoes.

I have a little garden
That I'm cultivating lard in,
As the things I eat are rather tough and dry;
For I live on toasted lizards,
Prickly pears, and parrot gizzards,
And I'm really very fond of beetle-pie.

The clothes I had were furry,
And it made me fret and worry
When I found the moths were eating off the hair;
And I had to scrape and sand 'em,
And I boiled 'em and I tanned 'em,
Till I got the fine morocco suit I wear.

I sometimes seek diversion
In a family excursion
With the few domestic animals you see;
And we take along a carrot
As refreshment for the parrot,
And a little can of jungleberry tea.

Then we gather as we travel,
Bits of moss and dirty gravel,
And we chip off little specimens of stone;
And we carry home as prizes
Funny bugs, of handy sizes,
Just to give the day a scientific tone.

If the roads are wet and muddy
We remain at home and study,—
For the Goat is very clever at a sum,—
And the Dog, instead of fighting,
Studies ornamental writing,
While the Cat is taking lessons on the drum.

We retire at eleven,
And we rise again at seven;
And I wish to call attention, as I close,
To the fact that all the scholars
Are correct about their collars,
And particular in turning out their toes.

Lloyd Mifflin

Lloyd Mifflin was born in Columbia, Pennsylvania, September 15, 1846, the son of Houston Mifflin, the portrait painter. He himself was an artist, but was forced to abandon painting in 1877 on account of poor health. After that date he devoted himself entirely to literary work, publishing six volumes of poems, the most interesting of them being *At the Gates of Song* (1897) and *The Fields of Dawn* (1900). He died in 1921.

Much of Mifflin's verse is doomed to extinction; in fact, most of

it has already died. He wrote entirely in the poetic diction of his day, in a rolling rhetoric with which we today are wholly out of touch and out of sympathy. In the amassing of grandiose terms and the piling up of metaphors, Mifflin was the forerunner of George Sterling and other poets of his persuasion. Yet, for all the faults of exaggeration and gaudiness of structure, some of Mifflin's sonnets attain a definite splendor. "The Harvest Waits" is one of these—a neglected poem in which the startling imagery fulfils and even amplifies the large conception.

SESOSTRIS

Sole Lord of Lords and very King of Kings,
He sits within the desert, carved in stone;
Inscrutable, colossal, and alone,
And ancienter than memory of things.
Graved on his front the sacred beetle clings;
Disdain sits on his lips; and in a frown
Scorn lives upon his forehead for a crown.
The affrighted ostrich dare not dust her wings
Anear this Presence. The long caravan's
Dazed camels stop, and mute the Bedouins stare.
This symbol of past power more than man's
Presages doom. Kings look—and Kings despair:
Their sceptres tremble in their jewelled hands,
And dark thrones totter in the baleful air!

"THE HARVEST WAITS"

God hath been patient long. In eons past
He plowed the waste of Chaos. He hath sown
The furrows with His worlds, and from His throne
Showered, like grain, planets upon the Vast.
What meed of glory hath He from the past?
Shall He not reap, who hears but prayer and groan?
The harvest waits. . . . He cometh to His own,—
He who shall scythe the starry host at last.

When the accumulated swarms of Death
Glut the rank worlds as rills are choked by leaves,
Then shall God flail the million orbs, as sheaves
Unfruitful gleaned; and, in His age sublime,
Winnow the gathered stars, and with a breath
Whirl the spurned chaff adown the void of Time!

James Whitcomb Riley

James Whitcomb Riley, who was possibly the most widely read native poet of his day, was born October 7, 1849, in Greenfield, Indiana, a small town twenty miles from Indianapolis, where he spent his later years. Contrary to the popular belief, Riley was not, as many have gathered from his bucolic dialect poems, a struggling child of the soil; his father was a lawyer in comfortable circumstances and Riley not only was given a good education, but was prepared for the law. His temperament, however, craved something more adventurous. At eighteen he shut the heavy pages of Blackstone, slipped out of the office and joined a traveling troupe of actors who sold patent medicines during the intermissions. Riley's functions were varied: he beat the bass-drum, painted their flaring banners, wrote local versions of old songs, coached the actors and, when occasion arose, took part in the performance himself.

Even before this time, Riley had begun to send verses to the newspapers, young experiments, bits of homely sentiment, simple snatches and elaborate hoaxes—the poem "Leonainie," published over the initials "E. A. P.," being accepted in many quarters as a newly discovered poem by Poe. In 1882, when he was on the staff of the Indianapolis *Journal,* he began the series of dialect poems which he claimed were by a rude and unlettered farmer, one "Benj. F. Johnson, of Boone, the Hoosier poet"—printing long extracts from "Johnson's" ungrammatical and badly-spelt letters to prove his find. A collection of these rustic verses appeared, in 1883, as *The Ole Swimmin' Hole;* and Riley leaped into widespread popularity.

Other collections followed rapidly: *Afterwhiles* (1887), *Old-Fashioned Roses* (1888), *Pipes o' Pan at Zekesbury* (1889),

Rhymes of Childhood (1890). All met an instant response; Riley endeared himself, by his homely idiom and his childlike ingenuity, to a countryful of readers, adolescent and adult.

But Riley's simplicity is not always as artless as it seems. Time and again, one can see him trading wantonly on the emotions of his unsophisticated readers. He sees them about to smile—and broadens the point of his joke; he observes them on the point of tears—and pulls out the sobbing *tremolo* stop. In many respects, he is patently the most artificial of those poets who claim to give us the stuff of the soil. He is the poet of obtrusive sentiment rather than of quiet convictions, of lulling assurance, of philosophies that never disturb his readers, of sweet truisms rather than searching truths. His influence has given rise to an entire school of "cheerful philosophy" versifiers; its lowest ebb may be seen in the insincere newspaper columns of the "A Smile a Day" variety and the syndicated syrup of Edgar A. Guest.

That work of his which may endure, will survive because of the personal flavor that Riley often fused into it. Such poems as "When the Frost Is on the Punkin," and "The Raggedy Man," are a part of American folk literature; "Little Orphant Annie" is read wherever there is a schoolhouse or, for that matter, a nursery. In 1912 the schools throughout the country observed his birthday.

Riley died in his little house in Lockerbie Street, Indianapolis, July 22, 1916.

"WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN"[1]

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;

[1] From the Biographical Edition of the *Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley*. Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

O, it's then the time a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmusfere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermuns to us of the barns they growed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead!—
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yaller heaps;
And your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is through
With theyr mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and sausage too! . . .

I don't know how to tell it—but ef such a thing could be
As the angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on *me*—
I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

A PARTING GUEST [1]

What delightful hosts are they—
Life and Love!
Lingeringly I turn away,
This late hour, yet glad enough
They have not withheld from me
Their high hospitality.
So, with face lit with delight
And all gratitude, I stay
Yet to press their hands and say,
"Thanks.—So fine a time! Good night."

Eugene Field

Although Eugene Field was born September 3, 1850, in St. Louis, Missouri, his work belongs to the literature of the far West. Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region claimed him as their own and Field never repudiated the allegiance; he even called most of his poetry "Western Verse."

Field's area of education embraced New England, Missouri and what European territory he could cover in six months. At twenty-three he became a reporter on the St. Louis *Evening Journal,* the rest of his life being given, with a dogged devotion, to journalism. Driven by the demands of his unique daily columns (those on the Denver *Tribune* [1881-1883] and the Chicago *Daily News* [1883-1895] were widely copied), Field first capitalized and then stand-

[1] From the Biographical Edition of the *Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley.* Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

ardized his high spirits, his erudition, his whimsicality, his fondness for children. He wrote so often with his tongue in his cheek that it is difficult to say where true sentiment stops and where exaggerated sentimentality begins. "Field," says Fred Lewis Pattee, in his detailed study of *American Literature Since 1870,* "more than any other writer of the period, illustrates the way the old type of literary scholar was to be modified and changed by the newspaper. Every scrap of Field's voluminous product was written for immediate newspaper consumption. He patronized not at all the literary magazines, he wrote his books not at all with book intent—he made them up from newspaper fragments. . . . He was a pioneer in a peculiar province: he stands for the journalization of literature, a process that, if carried to its logical extreme, will make of the man of letters a mere newspaper reporter."

Though Field still may be overrated in some quarters, there is little doubt that some of his child lyrics, his homely philosophic ballads (in the vein which Harte and Riley popularized) and his brilliant burlesques will occupy a niche in American letters. Readers of all tastes will find much to surprise and delight them in *A Little Book of Western Verse* (1889), *With Trumpet and Drum* (1892), *A Second Book of Verse* (1893) and those remarkable versions (and perversions) of Horace, *Echoes from the Sabine Farm* (1893), written in collaboration with his equally adroit though practically unknown brother, Roswell M. Field. A complete one-volume edition of his verse was issued in 1910.

Field died in Chicago, Illinois, November 4, 1895.

OUR TWO OPINIONS[1]

Us two wuz boys when we fell out,—
  Nigh to the age uv my youngest now;
Don't rec'lect what 'twuz about,
  Some small deeff'rence, I'll allow.
Lived next neighbors twenty years,
  A-hatin' each other, me 'nd Jim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me,*
  'Nd *I* havin' my opinyin uv *him.*

[1] Reprinted from *The Complete Works of Eugene Field* by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, holders of the copyright.

Grew up together 'nd wouldn't speak,
Courted sisters, 'nd marr'd 'em, too;
'Tended same meetin'-house oncet a week,
A-hatin' each other through 'nd through!
But when Abe Linkern asked the West
F'r soldiers, we answered,—me 'nd Jim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me,*
'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him.*

But down in Tennessee one night
Ther' wuz sound uv firin' fur away,
'Nd the sergeant allowed ther'd be a fight
With the Johnnie Rebs some time nex' day;
'Nd as I wuz thinkin' uv Lizzie 'nd home
Jim stood afore me, long 'nd slim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me,*
'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him.*

Seemed like we knew there wuz goin' to be
Serious trouble f'r me 'nd him;
Us two shuck hands, did Jim 'nd me,
But never a word from me or Jim!
He went *his* way 'nd *I* went *mine,*
'Nd into the battle's roar went we,—
I havin' *my* opinyin of Jim,
'Nd *he* havin' *his* opinyin uv *me.*

Jim never came back from the war again,
But I hain't forgot that last, last night
When, waitin' f'r orders, us two men
Made up 'nd shuck hands, afore the fight.
'Nd after it all, it's soothin' to know
That here I be 'nd younder's Jim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me,*
'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him.*

LITTLE BOY BLUE[1]

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
The little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair;
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise!"
So, toddling off to his trundle bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;
And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true!

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face;
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.

SEEIN' THINGS[1]

I ain't afraid uv snakes or toads, or bugs or worms or mice,
An' things 'at girls are skeered uv I think are awful nice!

[1] Reprinted from *The Complete Works of Eugene Field* by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, holders of the copyright.

I'm pretty brave I guess; an' yet I hate to go to bed,
For, when I'm tucked up warm an' snug an' when my
prayers are said,
Mother tells me "Happy Dreams" an' takes away the light,
An' leaves me lyin' all alone an' seein' things at night!

Sometimes they're in the corner, sometimes they're by the
door,
Sometimes they're all a-standin' in the middle uv the floor;
Sometimes they are a-sittin' down, sometimes they're walkin'
round
So softly and so creepy-like they never make a sound!
Sometimes they are as black as ink, an' other times they're
white—
But color ain't no difference when you see things at night!

Once, when I licked a feller 'at had just moved on our street,
An' father sent me up to bed without a bite to eat,
I woke up in the dark an' saw things standin' in a row,
A-lookin' at me cross-eyed an' p'intin' at me—*so!*
Oh, my! I wuz so skeered 'at time I never slep' a mite—
It's almost alluz when I'm bad I see things at night!

Lucky thing I ain't a girl or I'd be skeered to death!
Bein' I'm a boy, I duck my head an' hold my breath.
An' I am, oh *so* sorry I'm a naughty boy, an' then
I promise to be better an' I say my prayers again!
Gran'ma tells me that's the only way to make it right
When a feller has been wicked an' sees things at night!

An' so when other naughty boys would coax me into sin,
I try to skwush the Tempter's voice 'at urges me within;
An' when they's pie for supper, or cakes 'at's big an' nice,
I want to—but I do not pass my plate f'r them things twice!
No, ruther let Starvation wipe me slowly out o' sight
Than I should keep a-livin' on an' seein' things at night!

Edwin Markham was born in Oregon City, Oregon, April 23, 1852, the youngest son of pioneer parents. His father died before he had reached his fifth year and in 1857 he was taken by his mother to a wild valley in the Suisun Hills in central California. Here he grew to young manhood; farming, broncho-riding, laboring on a cattle ranch, educating himself in the primitive country schools and supplementing his studies with whatever books he could procure. At eighteen he determined to be a teacher and entered the State Normal School at San José.

Since childhood, Markham had been writing verses of no extraordinary merit, one of his earliest pieces being a typically Byronic echo *(A Dream of Chaos)* full of the high-sounding fustian of the period. Several years before he uttered his famous challenge, Markham was writing poems of protest, insurrectionary in theme but conventional in effect. Suddenly, in 1899, a new force surged through him; a sense of outrage at the inequality of human struggle voiced itself in the sweeping and sonorous poem, "The Man with the Hoe." (See Preface.) Inspired by Millet's painting, Markham made the bowed, broken French peasant a symbol of the poverty-stricken toiler in all lands—his was a protest not against toil but the drudgery, the soul-destroying exploitation of labor. "The Yeoman is the landed and well-to-do farmer," says Markham, "you need shed no tears for him. But here in the Millet picture is his opposite—the Hoeman; the landless, the soul-blighted workman of the world, the dumb creature that has no time to rest, no time to think, no time for the hopes that make us men."

The success of the poem upon its appearance in the San Francisco *Examiner* (January 15, 1899) was instantaneous and universal. The lines appeared in every part of the globe; it was quoted and copied in every walk of life, in the literary, the leisure, and the labor world. The same year of its publication, it was incorporated in Markham's first volume, *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems* (1899). Two years later, his almost equally well known poem was published. The same passion that fired Markham to champion the great common workers equipped him to write fittingly of the Great Commoner in *Lincoln, and Other Poems* (1901). His later volumes are melodious but scarcely remarkable. They are marred by having the rhetoric without the

resonance of the famous forerunners. Never reaching the heights of his two early classics, there are, nevertheless, moments of a related dignity in *The Shoes of Happiness* (1914) and *The Gates of Paradise* (1920).

Markham came East in 1901, where he has lived ever since, making his home on Staten Island, New York.

OUTWITTED

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

THE MAN WITH THE HOE[1]

(*Written after seeing Millet's world-famous painting*)

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?

[1] Revised version, 1920. Copyright by Edwin Markham.

Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

PREPAREDNESS

For all your days prepare,
And meet them ever alike:
When you are the anvil, bear—
When you are the hammer, strike.

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE[1]

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road—
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of earth,
Dasht through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixt a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of the Mystic Powers,
Moving—all husht—behind the mortal veil.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and tang of elemental things:
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;
The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way

[1] See pages 147, 158, 279, 293, 298, 400.

Under the mountain to the rifted rock;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West,
He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth.

Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve—
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow:
The grip that swung the ax in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free.

So came the Captain with the mighty heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spiked again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place—
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

Charles Erskine Scott Wood was born at Erie, Pennsylvania, February 20, 1852, educated at the United States Military Academy (1874) and Columbia, where he received the degrees of Ph.B. and LL.B. in 1883. Wood served in the United States Army for almost ten years, acting as lieutenant in various campaigns against the Indians during 1877-8. He was admitted to the bar in 1884, practised at Portland, Oregon, and retired in 1919.

In 1901 he published *A Book of Tales, Being Myths of the North American Indians.* In 1904, his symbolic *A Masque of Love* appeared. His finest work, however, is *The Poet in the Desert* (1915), a sonorous pageant of protest from which the first two quoted excerpts are taken. The volume itself is one long poem, a rhapsodic dialogue between Truth and a poet: the central theme might be termed the manhood of humanity, and about this leading *motif* Wood has woven a set of graphic variations. A disgust of tyranny, a challenge to injustice, a celebration of bastards—these may be the motive power prompting the poet; what results, however, has not merely the ring of passion but is a controlled assembling of sharply drawn pictures.

In 1918 a limited number of privately printed copies of *Maia* appeared. *Maia* is a sonnet sequence of the seasons with numerous interjections by the author and a few interpolations by Sara Bard Field, to whom is credited the form of the volume. This sequence, although not Wood's most memorable work, is a complete answer to those who claimed that most writers of free verse, and Wood in particular, could not successfully undertake the strict patterns. The third quotation in the following group is an added rebuttal to the old charge; it is one of Wood's most recent verses and has not yet appeared in any of his volumes.

SUNRISE

(From "The Poet in the Desert")

The lean coyote, prowler of the night,
Slips to his rocky fastnesses.
Jack-rabbits noiselessly shuttle among the sage-brush,
And, from the castellated cliffs,
Rock-ravens launch their proud black sails upon the day.
The wild horses troop back to their pastures.

The poplar-trees watch beside the irrigation-ditches.
Orioles, whose nests sway in the cotton-wood trees by the ditch-side, begin to twitter.
All shy things, breathless, watch
The thin white skirts of dawn,
The dancer of the sky,
Who trips daintily down the mountain-side
Emptying her crystal chalice. . . .
And a red-bird, dipped in sunrise, cracks from a poplar's top
His exultant whip above a silver world.

THE DESERT

She is a nun, withdrawing behind her veil;
Grey, mysterious, meditative, unapproachable.
Her body is tawny with the eagerness of the Sun
And her eyes are pools which shine in deep canyons.
She is a beautiful swart woman
With opals at her throat,
Rubies at her wrists
And topaz about her ankles.
Her breasts are like the evening and the day stars.

She sits upon her throne of light, proud and silent,
Indifferent to wooers.
The Sun is her servitor, the stars her attendants,
Running before her.
She sings a song unto her own ears,
Solitary but sufficient:
The song of her being.
She is a naked dancer, dancing upon
A pavement of porphyry and pearl,
Dazzling, so that the eyes must be shaded.
She wears the stars upon her bosom
And braids her hair with the constellations.

FIRST SNOW

The cows are bawling in the mountains.
The snowflakes fall.
They are leaving the pools and pebbled fountains;
Troubled, they bawl.
They are winding down the mountain's shoulders
Through the open pines,
Through wild rose thickets and the granite boulders
In broken lines.
Each calf trots close beside its mother
And so they go,
Bawling and calling to one another
About the snow.

Irwin Russell

Irwin Russell was born June 3, 1853, at Port Gibson, Mississippi, where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. His restless nature and wayward disposition drove him from one place to another, from dissipation to dissipation, from a not too rugged health to an utter breakdown. In July, 1879, he was forced to leave New York, working his way down to New Orleans on a coast steamer, trying to rehabilitate himself as reporter on the New Orleans *Picayune*. But illness pursued him and the following December Russell died, cut off, in the midst of his promise, before he had reached his twenty-seventh year.

Although Russell did not take his poetry seriously and though the bulk of it is small, its influence has been large. Thomas Nelson Page and Joel Chandler Harris have acknowledged their indebtedness to him; the creator of Uncle Remus writing, "Irwin Russell was among the first—if not the very first—of Southern writers to appreciate the literary possibilities of the negro character." He entered their life, appreciated their fresh turns of thought, saw things with that peculiar mixture of reverence and unconscious humor that is so integral a part of negro songs and spirituals. "Blessing the Dance" and "De Fust Banjo" (from Russell's

operetta *Christmas-Night in the Quarters,* possibly his best known work) are excellent examples; faithful renderings of the mind of the old-fashioned, simple and sententious child of the plantation. In the latter poem the old story of Noah is told, with delightful additions, from the colorful angle of the "darky"; local in its setting, revealing in its quaint psychology.

A collection of Russell's poems appeared, with an introduction by Joel Chandler Harris, in 1888. In 1917, a more inclusive volume, beautifully printed, with illustrations by E. W. Kemble, was published by The Century Company. It was given the title *Christmas-Night in the Quarters.*

Russell died suddenly, in an obscure boarding house in New Orleans, December 23, 1879.

BLESSING THE DANCE

(From *Christmas-Night in the Quarters*)

O Mahsr! let dis gath'rin fin' a blessin' in yo' sight!
Don't jedge us hard fur what we does—yo' know it's
Chrismus-night;
An' all de balunce ob de yeah we does as right's we kin.
Ef dancin's wrong, O Mahsr! let de time excuse de sin!

We labors in de vin'ya'd, wukin' hard an' wukin' true;
Now, shorely yo' won't notus, ef we eats a grape or two,
An' takes a leetle holiday,—a leetle restin'-spell,—
Bekase, nex' week, we'll start in fresh, an' labor twicet as
well.

Remember, Mahsr,—min' dis now,—de sinfulness ob sin
Is 'pendin' 'pon de sperrit what we goes an' does it in;
An' in a righchis frame ob min' we's gwine to dance an' sing,
A-feelin' like King David, when he cut de pigeon-wing.

It seems to me—indeed it do—I mebbe mout be wrong—
Dat people raly *ought* to dance, when Chrismus comes along;
Des dance bekase dey's happy—like de birds hops in de trees,
De pine-top fiddle soundin' to de bowin' ob de breeze.

We has no ark to dance afore, like Isrul's prophet king;
We has no harp to soun' de chords, to holp us out to sing;
But 'cordin' to de gif's we has we does de bes' we knows,
An' folks don't 'spise de vi'let-flower bekase it ain't de rose.

Yes, bless us, please, Sah, eben ef we's doin' wrong to-night;
Kase den we'll need de blessin' more'n ef we's doin' right;
An' let de blessin's stay wid us, untel we comes to die,
An' goes to keep our Chrismus wid dem sheriffs in de sky!

Yes, tell dem preshis anguls we's a-gwine to jine 'em soon:
Our voices we's a-trainin' fur to sing de glory tune;
We's ready when you wants us, an' it ain't no matter when.
O Mahsr! call yo' chillen soon, an' take 'em home! *Amen.*

DE FUST BANJO

Go 'way, fiddle! folks is tired o' hearin' you a-squawkin'.
Keep silence fur yo' betters! don't you heah de banjo talkin'?
About de 'possum's tail she's gwine to lecter—ladies, listen!
About de ha'r whut isn't dar, an' why de ha'r is missin':

"Dar's gwine to be a' oberflow," said Noah, lookin' solemn—
Fur Noah tuk de "Herald," an' he read de ribber column—
An' so he sot his hands to wuk a-clarin' timber-patches,
An' lowed he's gwine to build a boat to beat de steamah *Natchez.*

Ol' Noah kep' a-nailin' an' a-chippin' an' a-sawin';
An' all de wicked neighbors kep' a-laughin' an a-pshawin';
But Noah didn't min' 'em, knowin' whut wuz gwine to happen:
An' forty days an' forty nights de rain it kep' a-drappin'.

Now, Noah had done cotched a lot ob ebry sort o' beas'es—
Ob all de shows a-trabbelin', it beat 'em all to pieces!

He had a Morgan colt an' sebral head o' Jarsey cattle—
An' druv 'em 'board de Ark as soon's he heered de thunder rattle.

Den sech anoder fall ob rain! It come so awful hebby,
De ribber riz immejitly, an' busted troo de lebbee;
De people all wuz drownded out—'cep' Noah an' de critters,
An' men he'd hired to wuk de boat—an' one to mix de bitters.

De Ark she kep' a-sailin' an' a-sailin' *an'* a-sailin';
De lion got his dander up, an' like to bruk de palin';
De sarpints hissed; de painters yelled; tel', whut wid all de fussin',
You c'u'dn't hardly heah de mate a-bossin' 'roun' an' cussin'.

Now Ham, de only nigger whut wuz runnin' on de packet,
Got lonesome in de barber-shop, an' c'u'dn't stan' de racket;
An' so, fur to amuse he-se'f, he steamed some wood an' bent it,
An' soon he had a banjo made—de fust dat wuz invented.

He wet de ledder, stretched it on; made bridge an' screws an' aprin;
An' fitted in a proper neck—'twuz berry long an' taprin';
He tuk some tin, an' twisted him a thimble fur to ring it:
An' den de mighty question riz: how wuz he gwine to string it?

De 'possum had as fine a tail as dis dat I's a-singin';
De ha'r's so long an' thick an' strong,—des fit fur banjo-stringin';
Dat nigger shaved 'em off as short as washday-dinner graces:
An' sorted ob 'em by de size—f'om little E's to basses.

He strung her, tuned her, struck a jig,—'twuz *"Nebber min' de wedder,"*—
She soun' like forty-lebben bands a-playin' all togedder:
Some went to pattin'; some to dancin': Noah called de figgers;
An' Ham he sot an' knocked de tune, de happiest ob niggers!

Now, sence dat time—it's mighty strange—dere's not de slightes' showin'
Ob any ha'r at all upon de 'possum's tail a-growin';
An' curyus, too, dat nigger's ways: his people nebber los' 'em—
Fur whar you finds de nigger—dar's de banjo an' de 'possum!

Edith M. Thomas

Edith Matilda Thomas was born at Chatham, Ohio, August 12, 1854. She was educated in the Normal Institute at Geneva, Ohio, and lived in New York from 1888 until her death in 1925.

Miss Thomas was the author of some dozen books of verse, most of them lightly lyrical in mood, although a few of her individual poems have a more dramatic quality. The best of her work may be found in *Lyrics and Sonnets* (1887), *The Inverted Torch* (1890) and *The Flower from the Ashes* (1915).

"FROST TO-NIGHT"

Apple-green west and an orange bar;
And the crystal eye of a lone, one star . . .
And, "Child, take the shears and cut what you will,
Frost to-night—so clear and dead-still."

Then I sally forth, half sad, half proud,
And I come to the velvet, imperial crowd,
The wine-red, the gold, the crimson, the pied,—
The dahlias that reign by the garden-side.

The dahlias I might not touch till to-night!
A gleam of shears in the fading light,
And I gathered them all,—the splendid throng,
And in one great sheaf I bore them along.

. . . . . .

In my garden of Life with its all late flowers
I heed a Voice in the shrinking hours:
"Frost to-night—so clear and dead-still" . . .
Half sad, half proud, my arms I fill.

George Edward Woodberry

George Edward Woodberry was born in Beverly, Mass., May 12, 1855, and was graduated from Harvard in 1877, his early efforts receiving the approval of James Russell Lowell. He taught for a few years at the University of Nebraska and was one of the editors of *The Nation*. From 1891 to 1904 he was Professor of Comparative Literature at Columbia University, where he exercised a decided influence on many of the younger writers.

His work is altogether romantic and classical in style, leaning heavily toward the Tennysonian tradition. Although there is an undercurrent of spiritual beauty throughout his poetry, he frequently loses his power of exaltation in a rhetoric that is both stilted and sentimental. His chief collections of verse are *The Flight and Other Poems* (1900), *Wild Eden* (1914) and *The Roamer and Other Poems* (1920). As editor he has prepared and introduced the *Works* of Edgar Allan Poe and *The Complete Works of Shelley*. He has also written several books of essays, criticism and biography.

IMMORTAL LOVE

Immortal Love, too high for my possessing,—
  Yet, lower than thee, where shall I find repose?
  Long in my youth I sang the morning rose,
By earthly things the heavenly pattern guessing!
Long fared I on, beauty and love caressing,
  And finding in my heart a place for those
  Eternal fugitives; the golden close
Of evening folds me, still their sweetness blessing.

Oh, happy we, the first-born heirs of nature,
For whom the Heavenly Sun delays his light!
He by the sweets of every mortal creature
Tempers eternal beauty to our sight;
And by the glow upon love's earthly feature
Maketh the path of our departure bright.

O, INEXPRESSIBLE AS SWEET

O, inexpressible as sweet,
Love takes my voice away;
I cannot tell thee when we meet
What most I long to say.

But hadst thou hearing in thy heart
To know what beats in mine,
Then shouldst thou walk, where'er thou art,
In melodies divine.

So warbling birds lift higher notes
Than to our ears belong;
The music fills their throbbing throats,
But silence steals the song.

H. C. Bunner

Henry Cuyler Bunner, one of our most delightful writers of light verse, was born at Oswego, New York, August 3, 1855. At twenty-two he was appointed editor of *Puck* (then the most prominent of comic weeklies), a position which he held until his death. For more than ten years he wrote almost all the rhymed contributions to that journal—to say nothing of quantities of short stories (his *Short Sixes,* first published in 1890, are still well-known), prose paragraphs, topical parodies, editorials, etc. Like Field, the artist was finally buried in the journalist; but, unlike him, Bunner kept the work of the serious poet separate from that

of the manufacturer of satiric trifles. Yet, in spite of certain detached fragments in *Airs from Arcady* (1884) and *Rowen: Second Crop Songs* (1892), Bunner is likely to be remembered chiefly for his flippant *vers de société,* his skilful and gravely mocking absurdities.

"Behold the Deeds!" is a splendid example of Bunner's wit and technical ingenuity. It is a burlesque of the old ballads in the guise of a Chant-Royal, one of the strictest and most difficult of the French forms. Another of his uncollected comic pieces ("Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe") owes its origin to the fact that a certain Western poet (Joaquin Miller) had composed a poem in which the name of the author of "Faust" was made to rhyme with "teeth." Bunner not only adopted this rhyme, but carried the broad satire further by mispronouncing Molière, achieving one of his happiest compositions.

Bunner's was, at best, an artificial world, a world of graceful compliments, polite evasions, rhymed *billets doux,* with light sighs and lighter laughter tinkling among the teacups. Lacking Austin Dobson's exquisiteness and *savoir faire,* he was not without the Englishman's neatness of touch.

Bunner died, in New Jersey, in 1896, a collection of his poems, edited by Brander Matthews, appearing the same year.

SHAKE, MULLEARY AND GO-ETHE

I have a bookcase, which is what
Many much better men have not.
There are no books inside, for books,
I am afraid, might spoil its looks.
But I've three busts, all second-hand,
Upon the top. You understand
I could not put them underneath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

Shake was a dramatist of note;
He lived by writing things to quote.
He long ago put on his shroud;
Some of his works are rather loud.

His bald-spot's dusty, I suppose.
I know there's dust upon his nose.
I'll have to give each nose a sheath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

Mulleary's line was quite the same;
He has more hair, but far less fame.
I would not from that fame retrench—
But he is foreign, being French.
Yet high his haughty head he heaves,
The only one done up in leaves,
They're rather limited on wreath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

Go-ethe wrote in the German tongue:
He must have learned it very young.
His nose is quite a butt for scoff,
Although an inch of it is off.
He did quite nicely for the Dutch;
But here he doesn't count for much.
They all are off their native heath—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

They sit there, on their chests, as bland
As if they were not second-hand.
I do not know of what they think,
Nor why they never frown or wink.
But why from smiling they refrain
I think I clearly can explain:
They none of them could show much teeth—
Shake, Mulleary and Go-ethe.

BEHOLD THE DEEDS!

(Being the Plaint of Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, Salesman of Fancy Notions, held in durance of his Landlady for a "failure to connect" on Saturday night.)

I would that all men my hard case would know,
How grievously I suffer for no sin:
I, Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, for lo!
I of my landlady am lockèd in
For being short on this sad Saturday,
Nor having shekels of silver wherewith to pay:
She turned and is departed with my key;
Wherefore, not even as other boarders free,
I sing (as prisoners to their dungeon-stones
When for ten days they expiate a spree):
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

One night and one day have I wept my woe;
Nor wot I, when the morrow doth begin,
If I shall have to write to Briggs & Co.,
To pray them to advance the requisite tin
For ransom of their salesman, that he may
Go forth as other boarders go alway—
As those I hear now flocking from their tea,
Led by the daughter of my landlady
Piano-ward. This day, for all my moans,
Dry-bread and water have been servèd me.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Miss Amabel Jones is musical, and so
The heart of the young he-boarder doth win,
Playing "The Maiden's Prayer" *adagio*—
That fetcheth him, as fetcheth the "bunko skin"
The innocent rustic. For my part, I pray
That Badarjewska maid may wait for aye

Ere sits she with a lover, as did we
Once sit together, Amabel! Can it be
  That all that arduous wooing not atones
For Saturday's shortness of trade dollars three?
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Yea! She forgets the arm that was wont to go
  Around her waist. She wears a buckle whose pin
Galleth the crook of her young man's elbow.
  I forget not, for I that youth have been!
Smith was aforetime the Lothario gay.
Yet once, I mind me, Smith was forced to stay
Close in his room. Not calm as I was he;
But his noise brought no pleasaunce, verily.
  Small ease he got of playing on the bones
Or hammering on the stove-pipe, that I see.
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Thou, for whose fear the figurative crow
  I eat, accursed be thou and all thy kin!
Thee I will show up—yea, up I will show
  Thy too-thick buckwheats and thy tea too thin.
Ay! here I dare thee, ready for the fray:
Thou dost *not* "keep a first-class house" I say!
It does not with the advertisements agree.
Thou lodgest a Briton with a puggaree,
  And thou hast harbored Jacobses and Cohns,
Also a Mulligan. Thus denounce I thee!
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Envoy

Boarders! the worst I have not told to ye:
She hath stolen my trousers, that I may not flee
  Privily by the window. Hence these groans.
There is no fleeing in a *robe de nuit*.
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

A PITCHER OF MIGNONETTE[1]

A pitcher of mignonette
  In a tenement's highest casement,—
Queer sort of flower-pot—yet
That pitcher of mignonette
Is a garden in heaven set,
  To the little sick child in the basement—
The pitcher of mignonette,
  In a tenement's highest casement.

Lizette Woodworth Reese

Lizette Woodworth Reese was born January 9, 1856, in Waverly, Baltimore County, Maryland, of mixed English and German stock. After receiving an education chiefly in private schools she taught English at the Western High School in Baltimore, where she has lived ever since. After many years of service, she retired in 1921. In 1923, the alumni of the High School, where she had taught for a full score of years, together with the teachers and pupils, presented the school with a bronze tablet inscribed with her poem, "Tears," one of the most famous sonnets written by any American.

At first glance, Miss Reese's work seems merely a continuation of the traditional strain; in fact, several of her critics have decried her poetry as being English rather than American. But, without stopping to call attention to how much Miss Reese's poetry is inextricably her own, it is only natural that her verse should sound a note which has been the dominant one in English pastoral poetry from Wordsworth to Housman. Nor is it Miss Reese's inheritance which is chiefly responsible for this. It is the country around Baltimore, every tree and path of which Miss Reese knows so intimately and which, settled by the English, has by a curious accident, the very shape and color of a county like Sussex.

Miss Reese's first book, *A Branch of May* (1887), has an undercurrent of intensity beneath its quiet contours. Few of its readers in the Nineties would have dreamed that this straightforward un-

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didactic speech would pave the way for the direct songs of Sara Teasdale and Edna St. Vincent Millay. In a period of sugared sentiment and lace valentine lyrics, Miss Reese's crisp lines were an entire generation ahead of the times and were consequently appreciated only for their pictorial felicities. *A Handful of Lavender* (1891), *A Quiet Road* (1896), and *A Wayside Lute* (1909), establish an artistry which, for all its seemingly old-fashioned elegance, is as spontaneous as it is skillful. Here are no verbal tricks, no false postures; here are the qualities which are never dependent on literary fashion. "This poetry of hers," writes Mary Colum, "will persist, not because the author was cleverer or more original than other writers, but because in some way her nerves were more subtle in response to the kinds of life and experiences that came her way."

From 1909 to 1920 there is a silence. During these ten years, Miss Reese wrote little, and published less. Suddenly her work appeared again, keener and more concise than ever. *Spicewood* was published in 1920, *Wild Cherry* in 1923. Both volumes, as well as the still more recent, and as yet uncollected, poetry (three examples of which are included in the following group), are full of the same things which have always held Miss Reese. Again and again she writes of lilacs in Old York Lane, of thorn trees and blackberry rain, of judas-blossoms and daffodils, of Spring ecstasy and lost love, of a dead lady in her garden and Mary in the manger. But there is always something personal, always something which makes the very repetitions take on a light which is both fresh and clear. At least a dozen of her brief songs and lyrical sonnets will find a lasting niche in American literature.

TEARS

When I consider Life and its few years—
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street,—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.

Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

SPICEWOOD

The spicewood burns along the gray, spent sky,
In moist unchimneyed places, in a wind,
That whips it all before, and all behind,
Into one thick, rude flame, now low, now high.
It is the first, the homeliest thing of all—
At sight of it, that lad that by it fares,
Whistles afresh his foolish, town-caught airs—
A thing so honey-colored and so tall!

It is as though the young Year, ere he pass
To the white riot of the cherry tree,
Would fain accustom us, or here, or there,
To his new sudden ways with bough and grass,
So starts with what is humble, plain to see,
And all familiar as a cup, a chair.

SPRING ECSTASY

Oh, let me run and hide,
  Let me run straight to God;
The weather is so mad with white
  From sky down to the clod!

If but one thing were so,
  Lilac, or thorn out there,
It would not be, indeed,
  So hard to bear.

The weather has gone mad with white;
The cloud, the highway touch.
White lilac is enough;
White thorn too much!

A GIRL'S MOOD

I love a prayer-book;
I love a thorn-tree
That blows in the grass
As white as can be.

I love an old house
Set down in the sun,
And the windy old roads,
That thereabout run.

I love blue, thin frocks;
Green stones, one and all;
A sky full of stars,
A rose at the fall.

A lover I love;
Oh, had I but one,
I would give him these,
Myself, and the sun!

A PURITAN LADY

Wild Carthage held her, Rome,
Sidon. She stared to tears
Tall, golden Helen, wearying
Behind the Trojan spears.

Towered Antwerp knew her well;
She wore her quiet gown
In some hushed house in Oxford grass,
Or lane in Salem town.

Humble and high in one,
  Cool, certain, different,
She lasts; scarce saint, yet half a child,
  As hard, as innocent.

What grave, long afternoons,
  What caged airs round her blown,
Stripped her of humor, left her bare
  As cloud, or wayside stone?

Made her as clear a thing,
  In this slack world as plain
As a white flower on a grave,
  Or sleet sharp at a pane?

A FLOWER OF MULLEIN

I am too near, too clear a thing for you,
A flower of mullein in a crack of wall,
The villagers half-see, or not at all;
Part of the weather, like the wind or dew.
You love to pluck the different, and find
Stuff for your joy in cloudy loveliness;
You love to fumble at a door, and guess
At some strange happening that may wait behind.
Yet life is full of tricks, and it is plain,
That men drift back to some worn field or roof,
To grip at comfort in a room, a stair;
To warm themselves at some flower down a lane:
You, too, may long, grown tired of the aloof,
For the sweet surety of the common air.

WILD CHERRY

Why make your lodging here in this spent lane,
Where but an old man, with his sheep each day,
Twice through the forgotten grass goes by your way,
Half sees you there, and not once looks again?

For you are of the very ribs of spring,
And should have many lovers, who have none.
In silver cloaks, in hushed troops down the sun
Should they draw near, oh, strange and lovely thing!
Beauty has no set weather, no sure place;
Her careful pageantries are here as there,
With nothing lost. And soon, some lad may start—
A strayed Mayer in this unremembered space—
At your tall white, and know you very fair,
Let all else go to roof within your heart.

OLD SAUL

I cannot think of any word
To make it plain to you,
How white a thing the hawthorn bush
That delicately blew

Within a crook of Tinges Lane;
Each May Day there it stood;
And lit a flame of loveliness
For the small neighborhood.

So fragile-white a thing it was,
I cannot make it plain.
Or the sweet fumbling of the bees,
Like the break in a rain.

Old Saul lived near. And this his life:—
To cobble for his bread;
To mourn a tall son lost at sea;
A daughter worse than dead.

And so, in place of all his lack,
He set the hawthorn-tree;
Made it his wealth, his mirth, his god,
His Zion to touch and see.

Born English he. Down Tinges Lane
His lad's years came and went,
He saw out there behind his thorn,
A hundred thorns of Kent.

At lovers slipping through the dusk,
He shook a lover's head;
Grudged them each flower. It was too white
For any but the dead.

Once on a blurred, wet, silver day,
He said to two or three:
"Folks, when I go, pluck yonder bloom,
That I may take with me."

But it was winter when he went,
The road wind-wrenched and torn;
They laid upon his coffin lid
A wreath made all of thorn.

TO LIFE

Unpetal the flower of me,
And cast it to the gust;
Betray me if you will;
Trample me to dust.

But that I should go bare,
But that I should go free
Of any hurt at all—
Do not this thing to me!

Horace Traubel

Horace Traubel, often referred to as "Whitman's Boswell," was born in Camden, New Jersey, December 19, 1858, of mixed Jewish and Christian parentage. His scholastic education was

desultory; after leaving school he sold newspapers, worked as an errand boy and helped his father in a stationery store. Later he became a printer's devil, proof-reader, reporter and editorial writer. In 1873 Walt Whitman came to Camden, little dreaming he would spend the remainder of his life there. He was almost friendless, a sick man, helpless and alone. The Traubel household welcomed him in and an extraordinary friendship sprang up immediately between the aging poet and the young boy. Traubel saw Whitman some part of each day for almost twenty years. "As the years fled," says David Karsner in his *Life of Horace Traubel,* "he catered to Whitman's needs in a hundred different ways. He would bring Old Walt such papers and magazines as he knew would interest him. He ran his errands . . . and assumed the details and responsibilities connected with the publishing of the later editions of Whitman's books." This intimacy is fully recorded in Traubel's chief work, a series of volumes, *With Walt Whitman in Camden,* a compilation of extraordinary value which has been called "Whitman's unconscious autobiography."

It is inevitable that Traubel's own poetry should betray the strong influence of his great friend and hero. And yet in several poems in *Optimos* (1910) and *Chants Communal* (1914) Traubel achieves a personal idiom; beneath the wearying length and repetitive phrases, he communicates the fire of the social revolutionist, the insurgent who wrote, "I build no fires to burn anybody up. I only build fires to light up the way."

Traubel died at Bon Echo, Ontario, Canada, where he had gone for his health, September 8, 1919.

HOW ARE YOU, DEAR WORLD, THIS MORNING?

How are you, dear world, this morning?
Clean from my bath of sleep,
Warm from the bosom of my mother star,
Recharged with the energy of my father self,
Restored from all derelict hours to the lawful service of time,
I come without gift or doctrine or tethering humor
To entertain your fateful will.

How are you, dear world, this morning?
I went to bed last night in the twist and snarl of a problem.
Have you awakened me to revelation?
Has some change come upon the face of the earth and the heart of man?
Was life still busy while my life slept?
Was something done with the dreams of my sorrow and joy to transfigure in man the drag of his daily task?
Have all the prophets who died unfulfilled and all the plain men and women and children who burned or starved from injustice come back to earth to partake of a deferred feast?
What is it, dear world, I bring with empty hands to your morning?
What is it, dear world, you bring with hands as empty to my bedside?

Do the things that were stolen remain stolen?
Do the lives that were destroyed remain dead?
Do the stragglers who failed still fail?
Does the sleeper who slept the sleep of the merchant awake only to the merchant?
Does the law that was yesterday at my throat awake only to the law?
Does the singer awake only to sing, the artist to paint, and the orator to talk?
Or does the merchant awake to the man?
Or does the law of the state awake to the law of the heart?
Or do stolen things shift back into right relations?
Or is the singer silent, or does the artist put aside his paints, or has the orator stopt talking, because something greater than song or art or eloquence has appeared in the face of the multitude?

How are you, dear world, this morning?
We have had confidences other days but somehow the confidences of this day are sweetest of all.

They find me where I am remote, they seek me out where
I am reluctant, they confirm me where I am weak,
They melt me down from flaw and angle into purity and
circle,
They interpret me to last night's strangers and they intro-
duce me to the real meanings of my vagrant past,
They remove me from my quarrels and they deliver me to
truce and peace;
For now I see that when of old I thought of justice and
believed I was dreaming that only then was I awake,
For now I see that the wrongdoer is the first to withdraw
wrong and is the only one who can withdraw it,
For now I see that all the effort I spent trying to discover
why lives were beautiful or ugly has shown me that
all ugliness and all beauty finally must lapse in one
transfiguration,
For now in the confidences of this morning, in the rapture
of this awakening, I find my illimitable roots trailed
backward and forward and round into all time and
all men,
Pledging my love to countless surrenders and repeals.

Frank Dempster Sherman

Frank Dempster Sherman was born at Peekskill, New York, May 6, 1860. He entered Columbia University in 1879, where, after graduation and a subsequent instructorship, he was made adjunct professor in 1891 and Professor of Graphics in 1904. He held the latter position until his death, which occurred September 19, 1916.

Besides being a writer of airy lyrics and epigrammatic quatrains, Sherman was an enthusiastic genealogist and a designer (especially of book-plates) of no little skill. As a poet, his gift was essentially that of a writer of light verse—fragrant, fragile, yet seldom too sentimental. Pleasant is the word for it, a pleasantness perfumed with wit.

Sherman never wearied of the little lyric; even the titles of

his volumes are instances of his penchant for the brief melody, for the sudden snatch of song: *Madrigals and Catches* (1887), *Lyrics for a Lute* (1890), *Little-Folk Lyrics* (1892), *Lyrics of Joy* (1904). A sumptuous collected edition of his poems was published, with an Introduction by Clinton Scollard, by Houghton Mifflin Company, in 1917.

AT MIDNIGHT

See, yonder, the belfry tower
  That gleams in the moon's pale light—
Or is it a ghostly flower
  That dreams in the silent night?

I listen and hear the chime
  Go quavering over the town,
And out of this flower of Time
  Twelve petals are wafted down.

BACCHUS

Listen to the tawny thief,
Hid beneath the waxen leaf,
Growling at his fairy host,
Bidding her with angry boast
Fill his cup with wine distilled
From the dew the dawn has spilled:
Stored away in golden casks
Is the precious draught he asks.

Who,—who makes this mimic din
In this mimic meadow inn,
Sings in such a drowsy note,
Wears a golden-belted coat;
Loiters in the dainty room
Of this tavern of perfume;
Dares to linger at the cup
Till the yellow sun is up?

Bacchus 'tis, come back again
To the busy haunts of men;
Garlanded and gaily dressed,
Bands of gold about his breast;
Straying from his paradise,
Having pinions angel-wise,—
'Tis the honey-bee, who goes
Reveling within a rose!

TWO QUATRAINS

IVY

Upon the walls the graceful Ivy climbs
And wraps with green the ancient ruin gray:
Romance it is, and these her leafy rhymes
Writ on the granite page of yesterday.

DAWN

Out of the scabbard of the night
By God's hand drawn,
Flashes his shining sword of light,
And lo—the dawn!

Charlotte P. S. Gilman

Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman was born at Hartford, Connecticut, July 3, 1860. She began public work in 1890, lecturing on ethics, economics and sociology, identifying herself with the labor question and the advance of women.

She has written about a dozen books, her best works being *Woman and Economics* (1898) and *Human Work* (1904). Her volume of verse, *In This Our World* (1898), hurls many a shaft of ironic wit. Beneath the whimsical humor of "A Conservative" and the better known "Similar Cases" (unfortunately too long to quote) there is a sub-acid satire not easily forgotten.

A CONSERVATIVE

The garden beds I wandered by
  One bright and cheerful morn,
When I found a new-fledged butterfly,
  A-sitting on a thorn,
A black and crimson butterfly
  All doleful and forlorn.

I thought that life could have no sting
  To infant butterflies,
So I gazed on this unhappy thing
  With wonder and surprise.
While sadly with his waving wing
  He wiped his weeping eyes.

Said I, "What can the matter be?
  Why weepest thou so sore?
With garden fair and sunlight free
  And flowers in goodly store,"—
But he only turned away from me
  And burst into a roar.

Cried he, "My legs are thin and few
  Where once I had a swarm!
Soft fuzzy fur—a joy to view—
  Once kept my body warm,
Before these flapping wing-things grew,
  To hamper and deform!"

At that outrageous bug I shot
  The fury of mine eye;
Said I, in scorn all burning hot,
  In rage and anger high,
"You ignominious idiot!
  Those wings are made to fly!"

"I do not want to fly," said he,
"I only want to squirm!"
And he drooped his wings dejectedly,
But still his voice was firm:
"I do not want to be a fly!
I want to be a worm!"

O yesterday of unknown lack,
To-day of unknown bliss!
I left my fool in red and black;
The last I saw was this,—
The creature madly climbing back
Into his chrysalis.

Louise Imogen Guiney

Louise Imogen Guiney was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1861. Although she attended Elmhurst Academy in Providence, most of her studying was with private tutors. In 1901 she went to England, where she lived until her death.

Traditional in form and feeling, Miss Guiney's work has a distinctly personal vigor; even her earliest collections, *Songs at the Start* (1884) and *The White Sail and Other Poems* (1887), are not without individuality. Her two most characteristic volumes are *A Roadside Harp* (1893) and *Patrins* (1897). A more recent publication, *Happy Ending,* appeared in 1909.

Though a great part of her work is poeticizing rather than poetry, there is no mistaking the high seriousness of her aim. Responding to the influence of the Cavalier Poets whom she greatly admired, her best lines vibrate with a pulsing vigor, an almost galloping courage. Aware of the nobility of the poet's mission, she held her pen "in trust to Art, not serving shame or lust;" a militant faith is the very keynote of her writing.

Miss Guiney died at Chipping-Campden, near Oxford, England, November 3, 1920.

THE WILD RIDE

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

Let cowards and laggards fall back! But alert to the saddle
Weatherworn and abreast, go men of our galloping legion,
With a stirrup-cup each to the lily of women that loves him.

The trail is through dolor and dread, over crags and morasses;
There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal or entice us;
What odds? We are Knights of the Grail, we are vowed to the riding.

Thought's self is a vanishing wing, and joy is a cobweb,
And friendship a flower in the dust, and glory a sunbeam:
Not here is our prize, nor, alas! after these our pursuing.

A dipping of plumes, a tear, a shake of the bridle,
A passing salute to this world and her pitiful beauty;
We hurry with never a word in the track of our fathers.

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

We spur to a land of no name, outracing the storm-wind;
We leap to the infinite dark like sparks from the anvil.
Thou leadest, O God! All's well with Thy troopers that follow.

THE KINGS

A man said unto his Angel:
"My spirits are fallen low,
And I cannot carry this battle:
O brother! where might I go?

"The terrible Kings are on me
With spears that are deadly bright;
Against me so from the cradle
Do fate and my fathers fight."

Then said to the man his Angel:
"Thou wavering, witless soul,
Back to the ranks! What matter
To win or lose the whole,

"As judged by the little judges
Who hearken not well, nor see?
Not thus, by the outer issue,
The Wise shall interpret thee.

"Thy will is the sovereign measure
And only event of things:
The puniest heart, defying,
Were stronger than all these Kings.

"Though out of the past they gather,
Mind's Doubt, and Bodily Pain,
And pallid Thirst of the Spirit
That is kin to the other twain.

"And Grief, in a cloud of banners,
And ringleted Vain Desires,
And Vice, with the spoils upon him
Of thee and thy beaten sires,—

"While Kings of eternal evil
Yet darken the hills about,
Thy part is with broken sabre
To rise on the last redoubt;

"To fear not sensible failure,
Nor covet the game at all,
But fighting, fighting, fighting,
Die, driven against the wall!"

Bliss Carman

(William) Bliss Carman was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, April 15, 1861, of a long line of United Empire Loyalists who withdrew from Connecticut at the time of the Revolutionary War. Carman was educated at the University of New Brunswick (1879-81), at Edinburgh (1882-3) and Harvard (1886-8). He took up his residence in the United States about 1887 and, with the exception of short sojourns in the Maritime Provinces, has lived there ever since.

In 1893, Carman issued his first book, *Low Tide on Grand Pré: A Book of Lyrics.* It was immediately successful, running quickly into a second edition. From the outset, it was evident that Carman possessed the true lyrical power: the ability to fuse thought in emotion, to interpret the external world through a personal intensity. Simple and direct in his choice of themes, his passion made them universal. A vivid buoyancy, new to American literature, made his worship of Nature frankly pagan as contrasted to the moralizing tributes of most of his predecessors. This freshness and irresponsible whimsy made Carman the natural collaborator for Richard Hovey, and when their first joint *Songs from Vagabondia* appeared in 1894 Carman's fame was established. (See Preface.)

Although the three *Vagabondia* collections contain Carman's best known poems, several of his other volumes (he has published almost twenty of them) vibrate with the same glowing pulse. An almost physical gaiety rises from *Ballads of Lost Haven* (1897), *From the Book of Myths* (1902) and *Songs of the Sea Children* (1904). Here are songs for the open road, the windy beach, the mountain top.

Carman has also written several volumes of essays and, in conjunction with Mary Perry King, has devised several poem-dances (*Daughters of Dawn,* 1913) suggesting Vachel Lindsay's later poem-games. Although the strength is diluted and the music somewhat thinned in the later collections, such as *April Airs* (1916), some of the old magic persists; the spell may be over-familiar but it is not powerless.

A VAGABOND SONG

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood—
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.
The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.
There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

THE GRAVEDIGGER

Oh, the shambling sea is a sexton old,
And well his work is done.
With an equal grave for lord and knave,
He buries them every one.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;

But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

Oh, the ships of Greece and the ships of Tyre
Went out, and where are they?
In the port they made, they are delayed
With the ships of yesterday.

He followed the ships of England far,
As the ships of long ago;
And the ships of France they led him a dance,
But he laid them all arow.

Oh, a loafing, idle lubber to him
Is the sexton of the town;
For sure and swift, with a guiding lift,
He shovels the dead men down.

But though he delves so fierce and grim,
His honest graves are wide,
As well they know who sleep below
The dredge of the deepest tide.

Oh, he works with a rollicking stave at lip,
And loud is the chorus skirled;
With the burly rote of his rumbling throat
He batters it down the world.

He learned it once in his father's house,
Where the ballads of eld were sung;
And merry enough is the burden rough,
But no man knows the tongue.

Oh, fair, they say, was his bride to see,
And wilful she must have been,
That she could bide at his gruesome side
When the first red dawn came in.

And sweet, they say, is her kiss to those
She greets to his border home;
And softer than sleep her hand's first sweep
That beckons, and they come.

Oh, crooked is he, but strong enough
To handle the tallest mast;
From the royal barque to the slaver dark,
He buries them all at last.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;
But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore, —
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

HEM AND HAW

Hem and Haw were the sons of sin,
Created to shally and shirk;
Hem lay 'round and Haw looked on
While God did all the work.

Hem was foggy, and Haw was a prig,
For both had the dull, dull mind;
And whenever they found a thing to do,
They yammered and went it blind.

Hem was the father of bigots and bores;
As the sands of the sea were they.
And Haw was the father of all the tribe
Who criticize to-day.

But God was an artist from the first,
And knew what he was about;
While over his shoulder sneered these two,
And advised him to rub it out.

They prophesied ruin ere man was made;
"Such folly must surely fail!"
And when he was done, "Do you think, my Lord,
He's better without a tail?"

And still in the honest working world,
With posture and hint and smirk,
These sons of the devil are standing by
While man does all the work.

They balk endeavor and baffle reform,
In the sacred name of law;
And over the quavering voice of Hem
Is the droning voice of Haw.

DAISIES

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, "Earth, it is well!"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good!"

Richard Burton

Richard (Eugene) Burton was born in Hartford, Connecticut, March 14, 1861. He has taught English at various colleges and universities since 1888, and has been head of the English depart-

ment of the University of Minnesota since 1906. His first book, *Dumb in June* (1895), is, in many ways, his best. It contains a buoyant lyricism, a more conscious use of the strain developed in Carman and Hovey's *Songs from Vagabondia*—a mood which he has never surpassed. Much of his other verse is far less distinctive, being what might be called "anonymous poetry"; a poetry that has, in spite of certain excellent qualities, little trace of the individual and practically no stamp of personality or place. The succeeding *Lyrics of Brotherhood* (1899) has a wider vision if a more limited music; several of the poems in this collection reflect the hungers, dreams and unsung melodies of the dumb and defeated multitudes. *From the Book of Life* (1909) has scarcely as much power and less poetry.

Besides his verse, Burton has written several books of essays, a life of Whittier and various volumes on the drama.

BLACK SHEEP

From their folded mates they wander far,
  Their ways seem harsh and wild;
They follow the beck of a baleful star,
  Their paths are dream-beguiled.

Yet haply they sought but a wider range,
  Some loftier mountain-slope,
And little they recked of the country strange
  Beyond the gates of hope.

And haply a bell with a luring call
  Summoned their feet to tread
Midst the cruel rocks, where the deep pitfall
  And the lurking snare are spread.

Maybe, in spite of their tameless days
  Of outcast liberty,
They're sick at heart for the homely ways
  Where their gathered brothers be.

And oft at night, when the plains fall dark
  And the hills loom large and dim,
For the Shepherd's voice they mutely hark,
  And their souls go out to him.

Meanwhile, "Black sheep! Black sheep!" we cry,
  Safe in the inner fold;
And maybe they hear, and wonder why,
  And marvel, out in the cold.

George Santayana

George Santayana was born in Madrid, Spain, December 16, 1863, came to the United States at the age of nine, and was educated at Harvard, where later he became instructor of philosophy the same year he received his Ph.D. This was in 1889. From 1889 to 1912, he remained at Harvard, becoming not merely one of the most noted professors in the history of the University, but one of the most widely appreciated minds in America. In 1914, he went abroad and ever since then he has been living in France and England.

Santayana's first work was in verse, *Sonnets and Poems* (1894). It is a wise seriousness which is here proclaimed, although the idiom is as traditional as the figures are orthodox. *The Sense of Beauty* (1896), and *The Life of Reason* (1905), received far more attention than Santayana's earlier verse. Having in the interval achieved fame as a philosopher, it is with an almost apologetic air that Santayana prefaces his collected *Poems* which, after a process of revision, appeared in 1923. "Of impassioned tenderness or Dionysiac frenzy I have nothing, nor even of that magic and pregnancy of phrase—really the creation of a fresh idiom—which marks the high lights of poetry. Even if my temperament had been naturally warmer, the fact that the English language (and I can write no other with assurance) was not my mother-tongue would of itself preclude any inspired use of it on my part; its roots do not quite reach to my centre. I never drank in in childhood the homely cadences and ditties which in pure spontaneous poetry set the essential key."

Yet, as Santayana himself maintains later on, the thoughts which prompted his verses could not have been transcribed in any other form. If the prosody is worn somewhat thin, it is because the poet-philosopher chooses the classic mold in the belief that the innate freedom of poets to hazard new forms does not abolish the freedom to attempt the old ones. The moralizing is personal, even the rhetoric is justified. "Here is the hand of an apprentice, but of an apprentice in a great school."

THE RUSTIC AT THE PLAY

Our youth is like a rustic at the play
That cries aloud in simple-hearted fear,
Curses the villain, shudders at the fray,
And weeps before the maiden's wreathèd bier.
Yet once familiar with the changeful show,
He starts no longer at a brandished knife,
But, his heart chastened at the sight of woe,
Ponders the mirrored sorrows of his life.
So tutored too, I watch the moving art
Of all this magic and impassioned pain
That tells the story of the human heart
In a false instance, such as poets feign;
I smile, and keep within the parchment furled
That prompts the passions of this strutting world.

"O WORLD, THOU CHOOSEST NOT THE BETTER PART"

O world, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.

Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.

Oliver Herford

Oliver Herford was born in December, 1863, at Manchester, England. He studied art in London and at Julien's in Paris, turned to literature as a pastime and, about 1890, came to the United States, where, becoming a citizen, he has lived ever since.

Herford, celebrated as a wit as well as draughtsman and versifier, is the author of no less than twenty volumes of light verse, prose pasquinades and burlesques. His *The Bashful Earthquake* (1898), *Rubaiyat of a Persian Kitten* (1904) and *This Giddy Globe* (1919) show Herford's delicate skill and his versatile dexterity. These volumes, like most of Herford's are embellished by his own drawings, which are fully as graceful as the accompanying verses.

EARTH [1]

If this little world to-night
  Suddenly should fall through space
In a hissing, headlong flight,
  Shrivelling from off its face,
As it falls into the sun,
  In an instant every trace
Of the little crawling things—
  Ants, philosophers, and lice,
Cattle, cockroaches, and kings,
  Beggars, millionaires, and mice,

[1] Reprinted from *The Bashful Earthquake* by Oliver Herford. Copyright, 1898, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Men and maggots all as one
As it falls into the sun. . . .
Who can say but at the same
  Instant from some planet far
A child may watch us and exclaim:
  "See the pretty shooting star!"

Richard Hovey

Richard Hovey was born May 4, 1864, at Normal, Illinois, and graduated from Dartmouth in 1885. After leaving college, he became, in rapid succession, a theologian, an actor, a journalist, a lecturer, a professor of English literature at Barnard, a poet and a dramatist.

His first volume, *The Laurel: An Ode* (1889), betrayed the overmusical influence of Lanier and gave promise of that extraordinary facility which often brought Hovey perilously close to the pit of mere technique. His exuberant virility found its outlet in the series of poems published in collaboration with Bliss Carman —the three volumes of *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894, 1896, 1900). Here he let himself go completely; nothing remained sober or static. His lines fling themselves across the page; dance with intoxicating abandon; shout with a wild irresponsibility; leap, laugh, carouse and carry off the reader in a gale of high spirits. The famous *Stein Song* is but an interlude in the midst of a far finer and even more rousing poem that, with its flavor of Whitman, begins:

I said in my heart, "I am sick of four walls and a ceiling.
I have need of the sky.
I have business with the grass.
I will up and get me away where the hawk is wheeling,
Lone and high,
And the slow clouds go by.
I will get me away to the waters that glass
The clouds as they pass. . . ."

Hovey's attitude to his art may be expressed in no better way than his own words concerning the poet: "It is not his mission,"

wrote Hovey in the *Dartmouth Magazine,* "to write elegant canzonettas for the delectation of the *dilettanti,* but to comfort the sorrowful and hearten the despairing, to champion the oppressed and declare to humanity its inalienable rights, to lay open to the world the heart of man—all its heights and depths, all its glooms and glories, to reveal the beauty in things and breathe into his fellows a love of it." This almost too conscious awareness of the poet's "mission" often marred Hovey's work; in responding to his program, he frequently overstressed his ringing enthusiasm, strained his own muscularity. But his power was as unflagging as his fraternal energy was persuasive. And in certain quieter moods the poet rose to new heights. The work on which he was engaged at the time of his death is significant; *Launcelot and Guenevere: A Poem in Five Dramas* is exemplary in its restrained force.

Although the varied lyrics in *Songs from Vagabondia* are the best known examples of Hovey, a more representative collection of his riper work may be found in *Along the Trail* (1898). Hovey was slow to mature; this volume, in conjunction with the uncompleted *Taliesin: A Masque,* shows his later, more intensive power. The mood reflected is spiritual rather than physical; the note is high but never shrill. Besides the later work, *Along the Trail* contains "Spring" and the stirring "Comrades" in full as well as the best of his vivid fragments.

Hovey died, during his thirty-sixth year, in New York, February 24, 1900.

AT THE CROSSROADS

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever—
And it well may be for a day and a night,
And it well may be forever.
But whether we meet or whether we part
(For our ways are past our knowing),
A pledge from the heart to its fellow heart
On the ways we all are going!
Here's luck!
For we know not where we are going.

Whether we win or whether we lose
With the hands that life is dealing,
It is not we nor the ways we choose
But the fall of the cards that's sealing.
There's a fate in love and a fate in fight,
And the best of us all go under—
And whether we're wrong or whether we're right,
We win, sometimes, to our wonder.
Here's luck!
That we may not yet go under!

With a steady swing and an open brow
We have tramped the ways together,
But we're clasping hands at the crossroads now
In the Fiend's own night for weather;
And whether we bleed or whether we smile
In the leagues that lie before us
The ways of life are many a mile
And the dark of Fate is o'er us.
Here's luck!
And a cheer for the dark before us!

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever,
And it well may be for a day and a night
And it well may be forever!
But whether we live or whether we die
(For the end is past our knowing),
Here's two frank hearts and the open sky,
Be a fair or an ill wind blowing!
Here's luck!
In the teeth of all winds blowing.

UNMANIFEST DESTINY[1]

To what new fates, my country, far
  And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star
  Compelled to what unchosen end,

Across the sea that knows no beach,
  The Admiral of Nations guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
  The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
  Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
  To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
  What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
  Who knew that God was in the flame?

Had not defeat upon defeat,
  Disaster on disaster come,
The slave's emancipated feet
  Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
  To mightier issues than we planned;
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
  My country, serves Its dark command.

[1] The phrase "manifest destiny," which came into ordinary usage during the Spanish-American War, was meant to indicate America's paternal (or, as the opposing faction claimed, imperialistic) mission. Hovey was among those who indignantly denied any but unselfish motives to the aims of his country.

I do not know beneath what sky
  Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
  I only know it shall be great.

LOVE IN THE WINDS

When I am standing on a mountain crest,
Or hold the tiller in the dashing spray,
My love of you leaps foaming in my breast,
Shouts with the winds and sweeps to their foray.
My heart bounds with the horses of the sea
And plunges in the wild ride of the night,
Flaunts in the teeth of tempest the large glee
That rides out Fate and welcomes gods to fight.

Ho, love, I laugh aloud and for love of you,
Glad that our love is fellow to rough weather,—
No fretful orchid hothoused from the dew,
But hale and hardy as the highland heather,
  Rejoicing in the wind that stings and thrills,
  Comrade of ocean, playmate of the hills.

COMRADES [1]

Comrades, pour the wine to-night,
  For the parting is with dawn.
Oh, the clink of cups together,
  With the daylight coming on!
    Greet the morn
    With a double horn,
When strong men drink together!

[1] This is the lyric interlude from the long poem of the same name composed by Hovey in 1893.

Comrades, gird your swords to-night,
For the battle is with dawn.
Oh, the clash of shields together,
With the triumph coming on!
Greet the foe
And lay him low,
When strong men fight together.

Comrades, watch the tides to-night,
For the sailing is with dawn.
Oh, to face the spray together,
With the tempest coming on!
Greet the Sea
With a shout of glee,
When strong men roam together.

Comrades, give a cheer to-night,
For the dying is with dawn.
Oh, to meet the stars together,
With the silence coming on!
Greet the end
As a friend a friend,
When strong men die together.

A STEIN SONG

(*From "Spring"*)

Give a rouse, then, in the Maytime
For a life that knows no fear!
Turn night-time into daytime
With the sunlight of good cheer!
For it's always fair weather
When good fellows get together,
With a stein on the table and a good song ringing clear.

When the wind comes up from Cuba,
  And the birds are on the wing,
And our hearts are patting juba
  To the banjo of the spring,
    Then it's no wonder whether
    The boys will get together,
With a stein on the table and a cheer for everything.

For we're all frank-and-twenty
  When the spring is in the air;
And we've faith and hope a-plenty,
  And we've life and love to spare:
    And it's birds of a feather
    When we all get together,
With a stein on the table and a heart without a care.

For we know the world is glorious,
  And the goal a golden thing,
And that God is not censorious
  When his children have their fling;
    And life slips its tether
    When the boys get together,
With a stein on the table in the fellowship of spring.

Madison Cawein

Madison (Julius) Cawein was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1865, and spent most of his life in the state of his birth. He wrote an enormous quantity of verse, publishing more than twenty volumes of pleasant, sometimes exuberant, but seldom distinguished, poetry. *Lyrics and Idyls* (1890) and *Vale of Tempe* (1905) contain his most characteristic stanzas, packed with the lush, adjectival love of Nature that led certain of his admirers to call him (and, one must admit, the alliteration was tempting) "the Keats of Kentucky."

Cawein's work divides itself into two distinct veins. In the one he dealt with the scenes and incidents of his mountain environ-

ment: the sag of an old house in the hills, the echoes of a feud, rumblings of the Ku Klux Klan, the ghastly details of a lynching. In his other mood (the one which unfortunately possessed him the greater part of the time) he spent page after page romanticizing Nature, touching up his already painted lilies, polishing his thinly-plated artificialities until the base metal showed through. He pictured all outdoors with painstaking detail. And yet it is somehow unreal, prettified, remote. Every now and then, with an irritating frequency, he tries to transport his audience to a literary Fairyland; but the reader is quickly wearied by the almost interminable procession of fays, gnomes, nixies, elves, dryads, sprites, pucks and fauns—be they ever so lyrical.

In spite of Cawein's too profuse lyricism, several of his pieces will doubtless remain, though it is not likely that the survivors will be the sugared sweetmeats by which his champions (including William Dean Howells) set such store. Those which show signs of more than contemporary life are those in which the poet's fancy is natural rather than forced, restrained rather than urged to the limits of literary imagination.

Cawein died in Kentucky in 1914.

SNOW

The moon, like a round device
On a shadowy shield of war,
Hangs white in a heaven of ice
With a solitary star.

The wind has sunk to a sigh,
And the waters are stern with frost;
And gray, in the eastern sky,
The last snow-cloud is lost.

White fields, that are winter-starved,
Black woods, that are winter-fraught,
Cold, harsh as a face death-carved
With the iron of some black thought.

THE MAN HUNT[1]

The woods stretch wild to the mountain side,
And the brush is deep where a man may hide.

They have brought the bloodhounds up again
To the roadside rock where they found the slain.

They have brought the bloodhounds up, and they
Have taken the trail to the mountain way.

Three times they circled the trail and crossed,
And thrice they found it and thrice they lost.

Now straight through the pines and the underbrush
They follow the scent through the forest's hush.

And their deep-mouthed bay is a pulse of fear
In the heart of the wood that the man must hear.

The man who crouches among the trees
From the stern-faced men that follow these.

A huddle of rocks that the ooze has mossed—
And the trail of the hunted again is lost.

An upturned pebble; a bit of ground
A heel has trampled—the trail is found.

And the woods re-echo the bloodhounds' bay
As again they take to the mountain way.

A rock; a ribbon of road; a ledge,
With a pine-tree clutching its crumbling edge.

[1] Reprinted by permission from *The Vale of Tempe* by Madison Cawein. Copyright, 1905, by E. P. Dutton and Co., New York.

A pine, that the lightning long since clave,
Whose huge roots hollow a ragged cave.

A shout; a curse; and a face aghast,
And the human quarry is laired at last.

The human quarry, with clay-clogged hair
And eyes of terror, who waits them there;

That glares and crouches and rising then
Hurls clods and curses at dogs and men.

Until the blow of a gun-butt lays
Him stunned and bleeding upon his face.

A rope, a prayer, and an oak-tree near.
And a score of hands to swing him clear.

A grim black thing for the setting sun
And the moon and the stars to look upon.

THE WINDS

Those hewers of the clouds, the Winds,—that lair
At the four compass-points,—are out to-night;
I hear their sandals trample on the height,
I hear their voices trumpet through the air:
Builders of storm, God's workmen, now they bear
Up the steep stair of sky, on backs of might,
Huge tempest bulks, while—sweat that blinds their sight—
The rain is shaken from tumultuous hair:
Now, sweepers of the firmament, they broom
Like gathered dust, the rolling mists along
Heaven's floors of sapphire; all the beautiful blue
Of skyey corridor and celestial room—
Preparing, with large laughter and loud song,
For the white moon and stars to wander through.

DESERTED

The old house leans upon a tree
  Like some old man upon a staff:
The night wind in its ancient porch
  Sounds like a hollow laugh.

The heaven is wrapped in flying clouds
  As grandeur cloaks itself in gray:
The starlight flitting in and out,
  Glints like a lanthorn ray.

The dark is full of whispers. Now
  A fox-hound howls: and through the night,
Like some old ghost from out its grave,
  The moon comes misty white.

Bert Leston Taylor

Bert Leston Taylor was born in Goshen, Massachusetts, November 13, 1866, and educated at the College of the City of New York. He was engaged in journalism since 1895, conducting his column "A Line o' Type or Two" in the Chicago *Daily Tribune*. He was the author of two novels as well as *A Line-o'-Verse or Two* (1911) and *Motley Measures* (1913), a pair of delightful light verse collections. Posthumous volumes have spread his lightly ironic verse beyond the mid-Western circle that read him daily.

Taylor died of pneumonia March 19, 1921.

CANOPUS

When quacks with pills political would dope us,
  When politics absorbs the livelong day,
I like to think about that star Canopus,
  So far, so far away.

Greatest of visioned suns, they say who list 'em;
To weigh it, science almost must despair.
Its shell would hold our whole dinged solar system,
Nor even know 'twas there.

When temporary chairmen utter speeches,
And frenzied henchmen howl their battle hymns,
My thoughts float out across the cosmic reaches
To where Canopus swims.

When men are calling names and making faces,
And all the world's ajangle and ajar,
I meditate on interstellar spaces
And smoke a mild seegar.

For after one has had about a week of
The argument of friends as well as foes,
A star that has no parallax to speak of
Conduces to repose.

William Vaughn Moody

William Vaughn Moody was born in Spencer, Indiana, July 8, 1869, and was educated at Harvard. After graduation, he spent the remaining eighteen years of his life in travel and intensive study—he taught, for eight years, at the University of Chicago—his death coming at the very height of his creative power.

The Masque of Judgment, his first and strikingly original work, was published in 1900. A richer and more representative collection appeared the year following; in *Poems* (1901) Moody effected that mingling of challenging lyricism and spiritual philosophy which becomes more and more insistent. (See Preface.) Throughout his career, and particularly in such lines as the hotly expostulating "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines" and the majestic uncompleted "The Death of Eve," Moody successfully achieves the rare union of poet and preacher. "Gloucester Moors" is an outcry against the few exploiting the many; "The Quarry"

and "An Ode in Time of Hesitation" are passionate with prophecy. His last extended works have an epic quality which, with their too crowded details and difficult diction, will effectually prevent them from ever becoming popular. But their importance will grow even as Moody's place in our literature will most likely be a higher one than that which has yet been accorded him.

Of the lyrics woven in "The Fire-Bringer" most anthologists have preferred the song beginning:

> Of wounds and sore defeat
> I made my battle stay.

The one reprinted here has not only the virtue of being little known but seems to the present editor even more searching, more typical of its author's spirit.

Moody's prose play *The Great Divide* (1907) was extremely successful when produced by Henry Miller. *The Faith Healer* (1909), another play in prose, because of its more exalted tone, did not win the favor of the theatre-going public. A complete edition of *The Poems and Poetic Dramas of William Vaughn Moody* was published in 1912 in two volumes.

In the summer of 1909 Moody was stricken with the illness from which he never recovered. Had he lived he would probably have become one of the major poets of his country. He died in October, 1910.

FROM "JETSAM"

Once at a simple turning of the way
I met God walking; and although the dawn
Was large behind Him, and the morning stars
Circled and sang about his face as birds
About the fieldward morning cottager,
My coward heart said faintly, "Let us haste!
Day grows and it is far to market-town."
Once where I lay in darkness after fight,
Sore smitten, thrilled a little thread of song
Searching and searching all my muffled sense
Until it shook sweet pangs through all my blood.

And I beheld one globed in ghostly fire
Singing, star-strong, her golden canticle;
And her mouth sang, "The hosts of Hate roll past,
A dance of dust-motes in the sliding sun;
Love's battle comes on the wide wings of storm,
From east to west one legion! Wilt thou strive?"
Then, since the splendor of her sword-bright gaze
Was heavy on me with yearning and with scorn,
My sick heart muttered, "Yea, the little strife,
Yet see, the grievous wounds! I fain would sleep."

O heart, shalt thou not once be strong to go
Where all sweet throats are calling, once be brave
To slake with deed thy dumbness? Let us go
The path her singing face looms low to point,
Pendulous, blanched with longing, shedding flames
Of silver on the brown grope of the flood;
For all my spirit's soilure is put by
And all my body's soilure, lacking now
But the last lustral sacrament of death
To make me clean for those near-searching eyes
That question yonder whether all be well,
And pause a little ere they dare rejoice.

Question and be thou answered, passionate face!
For I am worthy, worthy now at last
After so long unworth; strong now at last
To give myself to beauty and be saved.

PANDORA'S SONG

(*From "The Fire-Bringer"*)

I stood within the heart of God;
It seemed a place that I had known:
(I was blood-sister to the clod,
Blood-brother to the stone.)

I found my love and labor there,
My house, my raiment, meat and wine,
My ancient rage, my old despair,—
Yea, all things that were mine.

I saw the spring and summer pass,
The trees grow bare, and winter come;
All was the same as once it was
Upon my hills at home.

Then suddenly in my own heart
I felt God walk and gaze about;
He spoke; his words seemed held apart
With gladness and with doubt.

"Here is my meat and wine," He said,
"My love, my toil, my ancient care;
Here is my cloak, my book, my bed,
And here my old despair.

"Here are my seasons: winter, spring,
Summer the same, and autumn spills
The fruits I look for; everything
As on my heavenly hills."

ON A SOLDIER FALLEN IN THE PHILIPPINES[1]

Streets of the roaring town,
Hush for him; hush, be still!
He comes, who was stricken down
Doing the word of our will.
Hush! Let him have his state.
Give him his soldier's crown,
The grists of trade can wait
Their grinding at the mill.

[1] Compare the point of view expressed in Hovey's "Unmanifest Destiny" on page 126. This poem was also written at the time of the Spanish-American War.

But he cannot wait for his honor, now the trumpet has
been blown.
Wreathe pride now for his granite brow, lay love on his
breast of stone.

Toll! Let the great bells toll
Till the clashing air is dim,
Did we wrong this parted soul?
We will make it up to him.
Toll! Let him never guess
What work we sent him to.
Laurel, laurel, yes.
He did what we bade him do.

Praise, and never a whispered hint but the fight he fought
was good;
Never a word that the blood on his sword was his country's
own heart's-blood.

A flag for a soldier's bier
Who dies that his land may live;
O banners, banners here,
That he doubt not nor misgive!
That he heed not from the tomb
The evil days draw near
When the nation robed in gloom
With its faithless past shall strive.

Let him never dream that his bullet's scream went wide
of its island mark,
Home to the heart of his darling land where she stumbled
and sinned in the dark.

George Sterling

George Sterling was born at Sag Harbor, New York, December 1, 1869, and educated at various private schools in the

Eastern States. He moved to the far West about 1895 and lived in California until he met death by his own hand in 1926.

Of Sterling's ten volumes of poetry, *The Testimony of the Suns* (1903), *A Wine of Wizardry* (1908) and *The House of Orchids and Other Poems* (1911) are the most characteristic. Ambrose Bierce was the first to hail Sterling with what now seems extravagant praise; he declared that *A Wine of Wizardry* contained some of the greatest lines in English poetry.

As the titles indicate, this is poetry of a flamboyant and rhetorical type; of luxuriant sentences and emotions decorated in "the grand manner." Yet Sterling has added a definite vigor to his ornate tropes and verbal prodigality. He is not always hurling suns about, sweeping the skies with orchids, strange gods and exotic stars. His simpler verses, though not in his most familiar vein, are among his best.

A recent collection, *Selected Poems,* was published in 1923.

THE BLACK VULTURE

Aloof upon the day's immeasured dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home—
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.

And least of all he holds the human swarm—
Unwitting now that envious men prepare
To make their dream and its fulfillment one,
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
His roads between the thunder and the sun.

THE MASTER MARINER

My grandsire sailed three years from home,
  And slew unmoved the sounding whale:
Here on a windless beach I roam
  And watch far out the hardy sail.

The lions of the surf that cry
  Upon this lion-colored shore
On reefs of midnight met his eye:
  He knew their fangs as I their roar.

My grandsire sailed uncharted seas,
  And toll of all their leagues he took:
I scan the shallow bays at ease,
  And tell their colors in a book.

The anchor-chains his music made
  And wind in shrouds and running-gear:
The thrush at dawn beguiles my glade,
  And once, 'tis said, I woke to hear.

My grandsire in his ample fist
  The long harpoon upheld to men:
Behold obedient to my wrist
  A grey gull's-feather for my pen!

Upon my grandsire's leathern cheek
  Five zones their bitter bronze had set:
Some day their hazards I will seek,
  I promise me at times. Not yet.

I think my grandsire now would turn
  A mild but speculative eye
On me, my pen and its concern,
  Then gaze again to sea—and sigh.

THE NIGHT OF GODS

Their mouths have drunken the eternal wine—
The draught that Baal in oblivion sips.
Unseen about their courts the adder slips,
Unheard the sucklings of the leopard whine;
The toad has found a resting-place divine,
And bloats in stupor between Ammon's lips.
O Carthage and the unreturning ships,
The fallen pinnacle, the shifting Sign!

Lo! when I hear from voiceless court and fane
Time's adoration of eternity,—
The cry of kingdoms past and gods undone,—
I stand as one whose feet at noontide gain
A lonely shore; who feels his soul set free,
And hears the blind sea chanting to the sun.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Edwin Arlington Robinson was born December 22, 1869, in the village of Head Tide, Maine. When he was still a child, the Robinson family moved to the nearby town of Gardiner, which figures prominently in Robinson's poetry as "Tilbury Town." In 1891 he entered Harvard College, leaving that institution in 1893. A little collection of verse (*The Torrent and the Night Before*) was privately printed in 1896 and the following year marked the appearance of his first representative work, *The Children of the Night* (1897).

Somewhat later, Robinson was struggling in various capacities to make a living in New York, five years passing before the publication of *Captain Craig* (1902). This richly detailed narrative, recalling Browning's method, increased Robinson's audience and his work was brought to the attention of Theodore Roosevelt (then President of the United States), who became interested in the poet and, a few years later, offered him a place in the

New York Custom House. Robinson held this position from 1905 to 1910, leaving it the same year which marked the appearance of his clear-cut characteristic volume, *The Town Down the River*. Robinson's three books, up to this time, showed his clean, firmly-drawn quality; but, in spite of their excellences, they seem little more than a succession of preludes for the dynamic volume that was to establish him in the first rank of American poets. *The Man Against the Sky,* in many ways Robinson's fullest and most penetrating work, appeared in 1916. (See Preface.) This was followed by *The Three Taverns* (1920), a less arresting but equally concentrated, distinctively voiced collection of poems.

In all these books there is manifest that searching for truth, the probing analysis, which takes the place of mere acceptance. Purely as a psychological portrait painter, Robinson has given American literature an entire gallery of memorable figures: Richard Cory, who "glittered when he walked," gnawing his dark heart even while he fluttered pulses with his apparent good fortune; Miniver Cheevy, sighing "for what was not," one of the most poignant pictures of the frustrated dreamer that has ever been drawn; the nameless mother in "The Gift of God," transmuting her mediocrity of a son into a shining demigod; poor Bewick Finzer, the wreck of wealth, coming for his pittance, "familiar as an old mistake, and futile as regret." Such sympathetic illuminations reveal Robinson's sensitive power, especially in his projection of the failures of life. Indeed, much of Robinson's work seems a protest, a criticism by implication, of that type of standardized success which so much of the world worships. Frustration and defeat are like an organ-point heard below the varying music of his verse; failure is almost glorified in his pages.

Technically, Robinson is as precise as he is dexterous. He is, in company with Frost, a master of the slowly diminished ending. But he is capable of cadences as rich as that which ends "The Gift of God," as pungent as the climax of "Calvary," as brilliantly fanciful as the sestet of his recent sonnet, "The Sheaves," in which he pictures a landscape where

> A thousand golden sheaves were lying there,
> Shining and still, but not for long to stay—
> As if a thousand girls with golden hair
> Might rise from where they slept and go away.

Although this is a particularly highly colored conceit, there is never a false image or a blurred line in any of his verses which, while adhering to the strictest models and executed according to traditional forms, are made fresh and surprising. It is interesting to observe how the smoothness of his rhymes, playing against the hard outlines of his verse, emphasizes the terse, epigrammatic vigor of poems like "The Gift of God," that magnificent modern ballad "John Gorham," "For a Dead Lady," and "The Master," one of the finest evocations of Lincoln which is, at the same time, a bitter commentary on the commercialism of the times and the "shopman's test of age and worth."

Robinson's blank verse is scarcely less individual. It is, in spite of a general astringency, always personal, always packed with the instant. In "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford" we have the clearest and most human portrait of Shakespeare ever attempted; the lines run as fluently as good conversation, as inevitable as a perfect melody. In his two reanimations of the Arthurian legends, *Merlin* (1917) and *Launcelot* (1920), Robinson, shaming the tea-table idyls of Tennyson, has colored the tale with somber reflections of the collapse of old orders, the darkness of an age in ashes.

Avon's Harvest, which the author has called "a dime novel in verse," a study of a fear-haunted, hate-driven man, appeared in 1921. In the same year the Macmillan Company issued his *Collected Poems,* which received the Pulitzer Prize for 1921. Subsequent volumes have strengthened his admirers' convictions and have disproved any fears that Robinson may have "written himself out." *Roman Bartholow* (1923) is a single poem of almost two hundred pages; a dramatic and introspective narrative in blank verse. *The Man Who Died Twice* (1924), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for that year, is likewise one long poem: a tale which is a cross between a grotesque recital and inspired metaphysics. Curiously enough, the mixture is one of Robinson's greatest triumphs; none of his portraits, either miniatures or full-length canvases, has given us a profounder insight of a tortured soul than this of Fernando Nash, "the king who lost his crown before he had it."

Dionysus in Doubt (1925) begins and ends with a caustic arraignment of our mechanistic civilization, and is primarily a scornful and carefully premeditated condemnation of the Eight-

eenth Amendment, an attack which never descends to polemics or political diatribe. Robinson's ironic accents lift every phrase above the argumentative matter; the darkest of his doubts are illumined by "the salvage of a smile." Besides two other longish poems, this volume includes eighteen sonnets which again display Robinson's supremacy in this form. He has, time and again, packed huge scenes into fourteen lines; if sonnets can assume the proportion of dramatic narratives, Robinson's have achieved this almost impossible feat.

Although he has often been accused of holding a negative attitude toward life, Robinson's philosophy is essentially positive; a dogged desire for a deeper faith, a greater light, keeps him plunging through a darkness which most of his contemporaries cannot even face. The effect upon his generation has been as salutary as it has been great. The conclusion of his sonnet to Crabbe might well be applied to him:

> Whether or not we read him, we can feel
> From time to time the vigor of his name
> Against us like a finger for the shame
> And emptiness of what our souls reveal
> In books that are as altars where we kneel
> To consecrate the flicker, not the flame.

Since 1911 Robinson has lived most of his summers at the MacDowell Colony at Peterborough, New Hampshire. His winters are spent in New York.

MINIVER CHEEVY [1]

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
  Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
  And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
  When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
  Would set him dancing.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Town Down the River* by E. A. Robinson.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

FOR A DEAD LADY[1]

No more with overflowing light
Shall fill the eyes that now are faded,
Nor shall another's fringe with night
Their woman-hidden world as they did.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Town Down the River* by E. A. Robinson.

No more shall quiver down the days
The flowing wonder of her ways,
Whereof no language may requite
The shifting and the many-shaded.

The grace, divine, definitive,
Clings only as a faint forestalling;
The laugh that love could not forgive
Is hushed, and answers to no calling;
The forehead and the little ears
Have gone where Saturn keeps the years;
The breast where roses could not live
Has done with rising and with falling.

The beauty, shattered by the laws
That have creation in their keeping,
No longer trembles at applause,
Or over children that are sleeping;
And we who delve in beauty's lore
Know all that we have known before
Of what inexorable cause
Makes Time so vicious in his reaping.

CALVARY [1]

Friendless and faint, with martyred steps and slow,
Faint for the flesh, but for the spirit free,
Stung by the mob that came to see the show,
The Master toiled along to Calvary;
We gibed him, as he went, with houndish glee,
Till his dimmed eyes for us did overflow;
We cursed his vengeless hands thrice wretchedly,—
And this was nineteen hundred years ago.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Children of the Night* by E. A. Robinson.

But after nineteen hundred years the shame
Still clings, and we have not made good the loss
That outraged faith has entered in his name.
Ah, when shall come love's courage to be strong!
Tell me, O Lord—tell me, O Lord, how long
Are we to keep Christ writhing on the cross!

THE MASTER * [1]

(*Lincoln. Supposed to have been written not long after the Civil War*)

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought;

* See pages 83, 158, 279, 293, 298, 400.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Town Down the River* by E. A. Robinson.

He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through,
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young,
Nor could it ever have been old.

For he, to whom we had applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smouldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:

With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

AN OLD STORY[1]

Strange that I did not know him then,
That friend of mine.
I did not even show him then
One friendly sign;

But cursed him for the ways he had
To make me see
My envy of the praise he had
For praising me.

I would have rid the earth of him
Once, in my pride.
I never knew the worth of him
Until he died.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Children of the Night* by E. A. Robinson.

RICHARD CORY[1]

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

BEWICK FINZER[2]

Time was when his half million drew
The breath of six per cent;
But soon the worm of what-was-not
Fed hard on his content;
And something crumbled in his brain
When his half million went.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Children of the Night* by E. A. Robinson.

[2] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Man Against the Sky* by E. A. Robinson.

Time passed, and filled along with his
  The place of many more;
Time came, and hardly one of us
  Had credence to restore,
From what appeared one day, the man
  Whom we had known before.

The broken voice, the withered neck,
  The coat worn out with care,
The cleanliness of indigence,
  The brilliance of despair,
The fond imponderable dreams
  Of affluence,—all were there.

Poor Finzer, with his dreams and schemes,
  Fares hard now in the race,
With heart and eye that have a task
  When he looks in the face
Of one who might so easily
  Have been in Finzer's place.

He comes unfailing for the loan
  We give and then forget;
He comes, and probably for years
  Will he be coming yet,—
Familiar as an old mistake,
  And futile as regret.

THE DARK HILLS [1]

Dark hills at evening in the west,
Where sunset hovers like a sound
Of golden horns that sang to rest
Old bones of warriors under ground,

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Collected Poems* by Edwin Arlington Robinson.

Far now from all the bannered ways
Where flash the legions of the sun,
You fade—as if the last of days
Were fading and all wars were done.

JOHN GORHAM[1]

"Tell me what you're doing over here, John Gorham,
Sighing hard and seeming to be sorry when you're not;
Make me laugh or let me go now, for long faces in the moonlight
Are a sign for me to say again a word that you forgot."—

"I'm over here to tell you what the moon already
May have said or maybe shouted ever since a year ago;
I'm over here to tell you what you are, Jane Wayland,
And to make you rather sorry, I should say, for being so."—

"Tell me what you're saying to me now, John Gorham,
Or you'll never see as much of me as ribbons any more;
I'll vanish in as many ways as I have toes and fingers,
And you'll not follow far for one where flocks have been before."—

"I'm sorry now you never saw the flocks, Jane Wayland,
But you're the one to make of them as many as you need.
And then about the vanishing. It's I who mean to vanish;
And when I'm here no longer you'll be done with me indeed."—

"That's a way to tell me what I am, John Gorham!
How am I to know myself until I make you smile?
Try to look as if the moon were making faces at you,
And a little more as if you meant to stay a little while."—

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Man Against the Sky* by E. A. Robinson.

"You are what it is that over rose-blown gardens
Makes a pretty flutter for a season in the sun;
You are what it is that with a mouse, Jane Wayland,
Catches him and lets him go and eats him up for fun."—

"Sure I never took you for a mouse, John Gorham;
All you say is easy, but so far from being true,
That I wish you wouldn't ever be again the one to think so;
For it isn't cats and butterflies that I would be to you."—

"All your little animals are in one picture—
One I've had before me since a year ago to-night;
And the picture where they live will be of you, Jane Wayland,
Till you find a way to kill them or to keep them out of sight."—

"Won't you ever see me as I am, John Gorham,
Leaving out the foolishness and all I never meant?
Somewhere in me there's a woman, if you know the way to find her.
Will you like me any better if I prove it and repent?"—

"I doubt if I shall ever have the time, Jane Wayland;
And I dare say all this moonlight lying round us might as well
Fall for nothing on the shards of broken urns that are forgotten,
As on two that have no longer much of anything to tell."

THE GIFT OF GOD[1]

Blessed with a joy that only she
Of all alive shall ever know,
She wears a proud humility
For what it was that willed it so,—

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Man Against the Sky* by E. A. Robinson.

That her degree should be so great
Among the favored of the Lord
That she may scarcely bear the weight
Of her bewildering reward.

As one apart, immune, alone,
Or featured for the shining ones,
And like to none that she has known
Of other women's other sons,—
The firm fruition of her need,
He shines anointed; and he blurs
Her vision, till it seems indeed
A sacrilege to call him hers.

She fears a little for so much
Of what is best, and hardly dares
To think of him as one to touch
With aches, indignities, and cares;
She sees him rather at the goal,
Still shining; and her dream foretells
The proper shining of a soul
Where nothing ordinary dwells.

Perchance a canvass of the town
Would find him far from flags and shouts,
And leave him only the renown
Of many smiles and many doubts;
Perchance the crude and common tongue
Would havoc strangely with his worth;
But she, with innocence unwrung,
Would read his name around the earth.

And others, knowing how this youth
Would shine, if love could make him great,
When caught and tortured for the truth
Would only writhe and hesitate;

While she, arranging for his days
What centuries could not fulfil,
Transmutes him with her faith and praise,
And has him shining where she will.

She crowns him with her gratefulness,
And says again that life is good;
And should the gift of God be less
In him than in her motherhood,
His fame, though vague, will not be small,
As upward through her dream he fares,
Half clouded with a crimson fall
Of roses thrown on marble stairs.

Edgar Lee Masters

Edgar Lee Masters was born at Garnett, Kansas, August 23, 1869, of old Puritan and pioneering stock. When he was still a boy, the family moved to Illinois, where, after desultory schooling, he studied law in his father's office at Lewiston. For a year he practised with his father and then went to Chicago, where he became a successful attorney.

Before going to Chicago, Masters had composed a great quantity of rhymed verse in traditional forms on traditional themes; by the time he was twenty-four he had written about four hundred poems, revealing the result of wide reading and betraying the influence of Poe, Keats, Shelley and Swinburne. His work, previous to the publication of *Spoon River Anthology,* was derivative and undistinguished. In 1895 he wrote a blank verse play on Benedict Arnold. In 1898 he published *A Book of Verses,* a selection of some sixty of the early four hundred. In 1902 *Maximilian,* another blank verse play, appeared, causing no more comment than the others. Nothing daunted, Masters published several volumes in rapid succession (three books of poetry appearing, under various pseudonyms, between 1905 and 1912), *The New Star Chamber and Other Essays* (1904), *Blood of the Prophets* (1905), *Althea,* a play (1907), *The Trifler,* another play (1908).

In 1914, Masters, at the suggestion of his friend, William Marion

Reedy, turned from his preoccupation with classic subjects and began to draw upon the life he knew for those concise records which have made him famous. Taking as his model *The Greek Anthology,* which Reedy had pressed upon him, Masters evolved *Spoon River Anthology,* that astonishing assemblage of over two hundred self-inscribed epitaphs, in which the dead of a middle Western town are supposed to have written the truth about themselves. Through these frank revelations, many of them interrelated, the village is recreated for us; it lives again, unvarnished and typical, with all its intrigues, hypocrisies, feuds, martyrdoms and occasional exaltations. The crippling monotony of existence in a drab township, the defeat of ideals, the struggle toward higher goals—all is synthesized in these crowded pages. All moods and all manner of voices are heard here—even Masters', who explains the reason for his medium and the selection of his form through "Petit, the Poet."

The success of the volume was stupendous. (See Preface.) With every new attack (and its frankness continued to make fresh enemies) its readers increased; it was imitated, parodied, reviled as "a piece of yellow journalism;" hailed as "an American Comédie Humaine." Finally, after the storm of controversy, it has taken its place as a landmark in American literature.

With *Spoon River Anthology* Masters arrived—and left. He went back to his first rhetorical style, resurrecting many of his earlier trifles, reprinting dull echoes of Tennyson, imitations of Shelley, archaic paraphrases in the manner of Swinburne. Yet though none of Masters' subsequent volumes can be compared to his masterpiece, all of them contain examples of the same straightforwardness, the stubborn searching that intensified his best-known characterizations.

Songs and Satires (1916) contains the startling "All Life in a Life" and the gravely moving "Silence." *The Great Valley* (1916) is packed with echoes and a growing dependence on Browning. In *Toward the Gulf* (1918), the Browning influence predominates, although there are such splendid individual monologues as "The World Saver," "St. Deseret" and "Front the Ages with a Smile." *Starved Rock* (1919), *Domesday Book* (1920) and *The New Spoon River* (1924) are, like all Masters' later books, queerly assembled mixtures of good, bad and derivative verse. These volumes prepared us for the novels which, as uneven as his verse, Masters

began to write. And yet, for all this poet's borrowings, in spite of his cynicism and disillusion, Masters' work is a continual if irritable quest for some key to the mystery of truth, the mastery of life. And there is always that definite milestone, the original *Spoon River Anthology.*

PETIT, THE POET [1]

Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, like mites in a quarrel—
Faint iambics that the full breeze wakens—
But the pine tree makes a symphony thereof.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus.
Ballades by the score with the same old thought:
The snows and the roses of yesterday are vanished;
And what is love but a rose that fades?
Life all around me here in the village:
Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,
Courage, constancy, heroism, failure—
All in the loom, and, oh, what patterns!
Woodlands, meadows, streams and rivers—
Blind to all of it all my life long.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, what little iambics,
While Homer and Whitman roared in the pines!

LUCINDA MATLOCK [1]

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters.

We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed—
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weàriness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life.

ANNE RUTLEDGE *[1]

Out of me unworthy and unknown
The vibrations of deathless music;
"With malice toward none, with charity for all."
Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,
From the dust of my bosom!

* See pages 83, 147, 279, 293, 298, 400.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters.

SILENCE [1]

I have known the silence of the stars and of the sea,
And the silence of the city when it pauses,
And the silence of a man and a maid,
And the silence for which music alone finds the word,
And the silence of the woods before the winds of spring begin,
And the silence of the sick
When their eyes roam about the room.
And I ask: For the depths
Of what use is language?
A beast of the field moans a few times
When death takes its young.
And we are voiceless in the presence of realities—
We cannot speak.

A curious boy asks an old soldier
Sitting in front of the grocery store,
"How did you lose your leg?"
And the old soldier is struck with silence,
Or his mind flies away
Because he cannot concentrate it on Gettysburg.
It comes back jocosely
And he says, "A bear bit it off."
And the boy wonders, while the old soldier
Dumbly, feebly lives over
The flashes of guns, the thunder of cannon,
The shrieks of the slain,
And himself lying on the ground,
And the hospital surgeons, the knives,
And the long days in bed.
But if he could describe it all
He would be an artist.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Songs and Satires* by Edgar Lee Masters.

But if he were an artist there would be deeper wounds
Which he could not describe.

There is the silence of a great hatred,
And the silence of a great love,
And the silence of a deep peace of mind,
And the silence of an embittered friendship,
There is the silence of a spiritual crisis,
Through which your soul, exquisitely tortured,
Comes with visions not to be uttered
Into a realm of higher life.
And the silence of the gods who understand each other without speech,
There is the silence of defeat.
There is the silence of those unjustly punished;
And the silence of the dying whose hand
Suddenly grips yours.
There is the silence between father and son,
When the father cannot explain his life,
Even though he be misunderstood for it.

There is the silence that comes between husband and wife.
There is the silence of those who have failed;
And the vast silence that covers
Broken nations and vanquished leaders.
There is the silence of Lincoln,
Thinking of the poverty of his youth.
And the silence of Napoleon
After Waterloo.
And the silence of Jeanne d'Arc
Saying amid the flames, "Blessèd Jesus"—
Revealing in two words all sorrow, all hope.
And there is the silence of age,
Too full of wisdom for the tongue to utter it
In words intelligible to those who have not lived
The great range of life.

And there is the silence of the dead.
If we who are in life cannot speak
Of profound experiences,
Why do you marvel that the dead
Do not tell you of death?
Their silence shall be interpreted
As we approach them.

Stephen Crane

Stephen Crane, whose literary career was one of the most meteoric in American letters, was born in Newark, New Jersey, November 1, 1871. After taking a partial course at Lafayette College, he entered journalism at sixteen and, until the time of his death, was a reporter and writer of newspaper sketches. When he died, at the age of thirty, he had ten printed volumes standing to his credit, two more announced for publication, and two others which were appearing serially.

Crane's most famous novel, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), was written when he was twenty-two years old. What is even more astonishing is the fact that this detailed description of blood and battlefields was written by a civilian far from the scene of conflict. This novel (Crane's second) was an instantaneous and international success. *The Atlantic Monthly* pronounced it "great enough to set a new fashion in literature"; H. G. Wells, speaking of its influence in England, said Crane was "the first expression of the opening mind of a new period . . . a record of intensity beyond all precedent."

Crane's other books, although less powerful than *The Red Badge of Courage,* are scarcely less vivid. *The Open Boat* (1898) and *The Monster* (1899) are full of an intuitive wisdom and a sensitivity that caused Wells to exclaim, "The man who can call these 'brilliant fragments' would reproach Rodin for not 'completing' his fragments."

At various periods in Crane's brief career, he experimented in verse, seeking to find new effects in unrhymed lines, a new acuteness of vision. The results were embodied in two volumes of unusual poetry. *The Black Riders* (1895) and *War Is Kind* (1899),

lines that strangely anticipated the Imagists and the epigrammatic free verse that followed fifteen years later. Acidulous and biting, these almost telegraphic concisions were unappreciated in his day; Crane's elliptical verse has not yet received its due in an age which employs its very technique. But it was forty years before Emily Dickinson won her rightful audience. And the impending publication of the first uniform *Complete Works* indicates that Crane may be coming into his own.

Besides his many novels, short stories and poems, Crane was writing, at the time of his death, descriptions of the world's great battles for *Lippincott's Magazine;* his droll *Whilomville Stories* for boys were appearing in *Harper's Monthly,* and he was beginning a series of similar stories for girls. It is more than probable that this feverish energy of production aggravated the illness that caused Crane's death. He reached his refuge in the Black Forest only to die at the journey's end, June 5, 1900.

I SAW A MAN

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
Round and round they sped.
I was disturbed at this;
I accosted the man.
"It is futile," I said,
"You can never"—

"You lie," he cried,
And ran on.

THE WAYFARER

The wayfarer,
Perceiving the pathway to truth,
Was struck with astonishment.
It was thickly grown with weeds.
"Ha," he said,

"I see that no one has passed here
"In a long time."
Later he saw that each weed
Was a singular knife.
"Well," he mumbled at last,
"Doubtless there are other roads."

HYMN

A slant of sun on dull brown walls,
A forgotten sky of bashful blue.

Toward God a mighty hymn,
A song of collisions and cries,
Rumbling wheels, hoof-beats, bells,
Welcomes, farewells, love-calls, final moans,
Voices of joy, idiocy, warning, despair,
The unknown appeals of brutes,
The chanting of flowers,
The screams of cut trees,
The senseless babble of hens and wise men—
A cluttered incoherency that says to the stars:
"O God, save us!"

THE BLADES OF GRASS

In Heaven,
Some little blades of grass
Stood before God.
"What did you do?"
Then all save one of the little blades
Began eagerly to relate
The merits of their lives.
This one stayed a small way behind,
Ashamed.

Presently, God said,
"And what did you do?"
The little blade answered, "Oh, my Lord,
Memory is bitter to me,
For, if I did good deeds,
I know not of them."
Then God, in all his splendor,
Arose from his throne.
"Oh, best little blade of grass!" he said.

THE HEART

In the desert
I saw a creature, naked, bestial,
Who, squatting upon the ground,
Held his heart in his hands,
And ate of it.
I said, "Is it good, friend?"
"It is bitter—bitter," he answered;
"But I like it
"Because it is bitter,
"And because it is my heart."

Edwin Ford Piper

Edwin Ford Piper was born at Auburn, Nebraska, February 8, 1871, and literally grew up in the saddle. In 1893 he entered the University of Nebraska, from which he received an A.B. in 1897 and an A.M. in 1900. He studied at Harvard (1903-4), was one of the editors of *The Kiote* (a magazine published from 1898 to 1902 in Lincoln, Nebraska), and, since 1905, has been an instructor of English at the State University of Iowa.

Piper's *Barbed Wire and Other Poems* (1918) is saturated with the color of his environment. His later poems are still more vivid and racy. "Sweetgrass Range" (with its self-acknowledged debt to Burns' "Rattlin' Roarin' Willie") and "Bindlestiff" are fresh evidences of this author's creative interest in ballads and folk-lore.

BINDLESTIFF

Oh, the lives of men, lives of men,
In pattern-molds be run;
But there's you, and me, and Bindlestiff—
And remember Mary's Son.

At dawn the hedges and the wheel-ruts ran
Into brightening sky. The grass bent low
With shimmering dew, and many a late wild rose
Unrolled the petals from its odorous heart
While birds held tuneful gossip. Suddenly,
Each bubbling trill and whistle hid away
As from a hawk; the fragrant silence heard
Only the loving stir of little leaves;
Then a man's baritone broke roughly in:

I've gnawed my crust of mouldy bread,
Skimmed my mulligan stew;
Laid beneath the barren hedge—
Sleety night-winds blew.

Slanting rain chills my bones,
Sun bakes my skin;
Rocky road for my limping feet,
Door where I can't go in.

Above the hedgerow floated filmy smoke
From the hidden singer's fire. Once more the voice:

I used to burn the mules with the whip
When I worked on the grading gang;
But the boss was a crook and he docked my pay—
Some day that boss will hang.

I used to live in a six by nine,
Try to save my dough—
It's a bellyful of the chaff of life,
Feet that up and go.

The mesh of leafy branches rustled loud,
Into the road slid Bindlestiff. You've seen
The like of the traveller: gaunt humanity
In stained and broken coat, with untrimmed hedge
Of rusty beard and curling sunburnt hair;
His hat, once white, a dull uncertain cone;
His leathery hands and cheeks, his bright blue eyes
That always see new faces and strange dogs;
His mouth that laughs at life and at himself.

Sometimes they shut you up in jail—
Dark, and a filthy cell;
I hope the fellows built them jails
Find 'em down in hell.

But up above, you can sleep outdoors—
Feed you like a king;
You never have to saw no wood,
Only job is sing.

The tones came mellower, as unevenly
The tramp limped off trailing the hobo song:

Good-bye, farewell to Omaha,
K. C., and Denver, too;
Put my foot on the flying freight,
Going to ride her through.

Bindlestiff topped a hillock, against the sky
Showed stick and bundle with his extra shoes
Jauntily dangling. Bird to bird once more
Made low sweet answer; in the wild rose cups

The bee found yellow meal; all softly moved
The white and purple morning-glory bells
As on the gently rustling hedgetop leaves
The sun's face rested. Bindlestiff was gone.

Oh, the lives of men, lives of men,
In pattern-molds be run;
But there's you, and me, and Bindlestiff—
And remember Mary's Son.

SWEETGRASS RANGE

Come sell your pony, cowboy—
Sell your pony to me;
Braided bridle and your puncher saddle,
And spend your money free.

"If I should sell my pony,
And ride the range no more,
Nail up my hat and my silver spurs
Above my shanty door;

"And let my door stand open wide
To the snow and the rain and sun;
And bury me under the green sweetgrass
Where you hear the river run."

As I came down the sweetgrass range
And by the cabin door,
I heard a singing in the early dusk
Along the river shore;

I heard a singing to the early stars,
And the tune of a pony's feet.
The joy of the riding singer
I never shall forget.

Thomas Augustine Daly was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 28, 1871. He attended Villanova College and Fordham University (1889), leaving there at the end of his sophomore year to become a newspaper man. Since 1891 he has been on the staff of various Philadelphia journals, writing reviews, editorials, travel-notes and, most of all, running the columns in which his much-quoted verse originally appeared.

Canzoni (1906) and *Carmina* (1909) contain the best-known of Daly's varied dialect verse. Although he has written in half a dozen different idioms including "straight" English (*vide Songs of Wedlock,* 1916), his half-humorous, half-pathetic interpretations of the Irish and Italian immigrants are his *forte.* "Mia Carlotta" and "Between Two Loves" rank with the best dialect rhyming of the period; "The Song of the Thrush," though less immediate in appeal, is a more personal communication.

Seldom descending to caricature, Daly exhibits the foibles of his characters without exploiting them; even the lightest passages in *McAroni Ballads* (1919) are done with delicacy and a not too sentimental appreciation. Less popular than Riley or Dunbar, Daly is more skilful and versatile than either; his range and quality are comparable to Field's.

THE SONG OF THE THRUSH

Ah! the May was grand this mornin'!
Shure, how could I feel forlorn in
Such a land, when tree and flower tossed their kisses to the breeze?
Could an Irish heart be quiet
While the Spring was runnin' riot,
An' the birds of free America were singin' in the trees?
In the songs that they were singin'
No familiar note was ringin',
But I strove to imitate them an' I whistled like a lad.
Oh, my heart was warm to love them
For the very newness of them—
For the ould songs that they helped me to forget—an' I was glad.

So I mocked the feathered choir
To my hungry heart's desire,
An' I gloried in the comradeship that made their joy my own.
Till a new note sounded, stillin'
All the rest. A thrush was trillin'!
Ah, the thrush I left behind me in the fields about Athlone!
Where, upon the whitethorn swayin',
He was minstrel of the Mayin',
In my days of love an' laughter that the years have laid at rest;
Here again his notes were ringin'!
But I'd lost the heart for singin'—
Ah, the song I could not answer was the one I knew the best.

MIA CARLOTTA

Giuseppe, da barber, ees greata for "mash,"
He gotta da bigga, da blacka mustache,
Good clo'es an' good styla an' playnta good cash.

W'enevra Giuseppe ees walk on da street,
Da people dey talka, "how nobby! how neat!
How softa da handa, how smalla da feet."

He raisa hees hat an' he shaka hees curls,
An' smila weeth teetha so shiny like pearls;
O! many da heart of da seely young girls
He gotta.
Yes, playnta he gotta—
But notta
Carlotta!

Giuseppe, da barber, he maka da eye,
An' lika da steam engine puffa an' sigh,
For catcha Carlotta w'en she ees go by.

Carlotta she walka weeth nose in da air,
An' look through Giuseppe weeth far-away stare.
As eef she no see dere ees som'body dere.

Giuseppe, da barber, he gotta da cash,
He gotta da clo'es an' da bigga mustache,
He gotta da seely young girls for da "mash,"
But notta—
You bat my life, notta—
Carlotta.
I gotta!

BETWEEN TWO LOVES

I gotta lov' for Angela,
I lov' Carlotta, too.
I no can marry both o' dem,
So w'at I gonna do?

O! Angela ees pretta girl,
She gotta hair so black, so curl,
An' teeth so white as anytheeng.
An' O! she gotta voice to seeng,
Dat mak' your hearta feel eet must
Jump up an' dance or eet weel bust.
An' alla time she seeng, her eyes
Dey smila like Italia's skies,
An' makin' flirtin' looks at you—
But dat ees all w'at she can do.

Carlotta ees no gotta song,
But she ees twice so big an' strong
As Angela, an' she no look
So beautiful—but she can cook.
You oughta see her carry wood!
I tal you w'at, eet do you good.

When she ees be som'body's wife
She worka hard, you bat my life!
She never gattin' tired, too—
But dat ees all w'at she can do.

O! my! I weesh dat Angela
  Was strong for carry wood,
Or else Carlotta gotta song
  An' looka pretta good.
I gotta lov' for Angela,
  I lov' Carlotta, too.
I no can marry both o' dem,
  So w'at I gonna do?

James Weldon Johnson

James Weldon Johnson was born in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1871, and was educated at Atlanta University and, later, at Columbia University. Even as an undergraduate he tried to support himself by writing and, after graduation, he and his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, became known for their successful contributions to vaudeville and the musical comedy stage. He served seven years as United States Consul in Venezuela and Nicaragua. In 1915 his English version of the libretto of *Goyescas,* the Spanish grand opera, was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

Johnson's *Fifty Years and Other Poems* (1918) contains much that is merely meretricious and facile versifying. But, half-buried in the midst of colorless clichés, one is delighted to discover not only the humor but the stern pathos which is characteristic of the Negro as singer. "The Creation," for example, is as large in conception as it is appealing in naïveté. The very childlike wonder of the stirring spirituals, such moving melodies as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "Nobody Knows" breathe through the best of his lines. They recapture some of that magic of which, in another connection, Johnson has written:

There is a wide, wide wonder in it all,
That from degraded rest and servile toil
The fiery spirit of the seer should call
These simple children of the sun and soil.

Besides his creative work (Johnson is also the author of *The Autobiography of an Ex-colored Man*), he has done many services for his race, not the least important of which is his preparation and editing of *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922).

THE CREATION

(*A Negro Sermon*)

And God stepped out on space,
And He looked around and said,
"I'm lonely—
I'll make me a world."

And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said, *"That's good!"*

Then God reached out and took the light in His hands,
And God rolled the light around in His hands,
Until He made the sun;
And He set that sun a-blazing in the heavens.
And the light that was left from making the sun
God gathered up in a shining ball
And flung against the darkness,
Spangling the night with the moon and stars.

Then down between
The darkness and the light
He hurled the world;
And God said, *"That's good!"*

Then God himself stepped down—
And the sun was on His right hand,
And the moon was on His left;
The stars were clustered about His head,
And the earth was under His feet.
And God walked, and where He trod
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out
And bulged the mountains up.

Then He stopped and looked and saw
That the earth was hot and barren.
So God stepped over to the edge of the world
And He spat out the seven seas;
He batted His eyes, and the lightnings flashed;
He clapped His hands, and the thunders rolled;
And the waters above the earth came down,
The cooling waters came down.

Then the green grass sprouted,
And the little red flowers blossomed,
The pine-tree pointed his finger to the sky,
And the oak spread out his arms;
The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of the ground,
And the rivers ran down to the sea;
And God smiled again,
And the rainbow appeared,
And curled itself around His shoulder.

Then God raised His arm and He waved His hand
Over the sea and over the land,
And He said, *"Bring forth! Bring forth!"*
And quicker than God could drop His hand,

Fishes and fowls
And beasts and birds
Swam the rivers and the seas,
Roamed the forests and the woods,
And split the air with their wings,
And God said, *"That's good!"*

Then God walked around
And God looked around
On all that He had made.
He looked at His sun,
And He looked at His moon,
And He looked at His little stars;
He looked on His world
With all its living things,
And God said, *"I'm lonely still."*

Then God sat down
One the side of a hill where He could think;
By a deep, wide river He sat down;
With His head in His hands,
God thought and thought,
Till He thought, *"I'll make me a man!"*

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled Him down;
And there the great God Almighty,
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of His hand—
This Great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till He shaped it in His own image;

Then into it He blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen.

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born in 1872 at Dayton, Ohio, the son of negro slaves. He was, before and after he began to write his interpretative verse, an elevator-boy. He tried newspaper work unsuccessfully and, in 1899, Dunbar was given a position in the Library of Congress at Washington, D. C.

Although Dunbar wrote several volumes of short stories and two novels, he is most at home in his verse. And even here, his best work is not those straight, "literary English" pieces by which he set such store, but the racy rhymes written in negro dialect, alternately tender and mocking. Dunbar's first collection, *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (1896), contains many of his most characteristic poems. In an introduction, in which mention was made of the octoroon Dumas and the great Russian poet Pushkin, who was a mulatto, William Dean Howells wrote, "So far as I could remember, Paul Dunbar was the only man of pure African blood and of American civilization to feel the negro life æsthetically and express it lyrically. . . . His brilliant and unique achievement was to have studied the American negro objectively, and to have represented him as he found him—with humor, with sympathy, and yet with what the reader must instinctively feel to be entire truthfulness."

Lyrics of the Hearthside (1899) and *Lyrics of Love and Laughter* (1903) are two other volumes full of folk-stuff. And though the final *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow* (1905) is less original, being crowded with echoes of all kinds of poetry from the songs of Robert Burns to the childhood rhymes of J. W. Riley, it contains a few of Dunbar's least known but keenest interpretations.

Since the original publications, various "gift-book editions" of his work have appeared, and his shorter poems have been set to music by dozens of composers.

Dunbar died in the city of his birth, Dayton, Ohio, February 10, 1916.

THE TURNING OF THE BABIES IN THE BED[1]

Woman's sho' a cur'ous critter, an' dey ain't no doubtin' dat.
She's a mess o' funny capahs f'om huh slippahs to huh hat.
Ef yo' tries to un'erstan' huh, an' yo' fails, des' up an' say:
"D' ain't a bit o' use to try to un'erstan' a woman's way."

I don' mean to be complainin', but I's jes' a-settin' down
Some o' my own obserwations, w'en I cas' my eye eroun'.
Ef yo' ax me fu' to prove it, I ken do it mighty fine,
Fu' dey ain't no bettah 'zample den dis ve'y wife o' mine.

In de ve'y hea't o' midnight, w'en I's sleepin' good an' soun',
I kin hyeah a so't o' rustlin' an' somebody movin' 'roun'.
An' I say, "Lize, whut yo' doin'?" But she frown an' shek huh haid,
"Hesh yo' mouf, I's only tu'nin' of de chillun in de bed.

"Don' yo' know a chile gits restless, layin' all de night one way?
An' yo' got to kind o' 'range him sev'al times befo' de day?
So de little necks won't worry, an' de little backs won't break;
Don' yo' t'ink 'cause chillun's chillun dey haint got no pain an' ache."

So she shakes 'em, an' she twists 'em, an' she tu'ns 'em 'roun' erbout,
'Twell I don' see how de chillun evah keeps f'om hollahin' out.
Den she lif's 'em up head down'ards, so's dey won't git livah-grown,
But dey snoozes des' ez peaceful ez a liza'd on a stone.

[1] From *Lyrics of Love and Laughter*. Copyright, 1903, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

W'en hit's mos' nigh time fu' wakin' on de dawn o' jedgement day,
Seems lak I kin hyeah ol' Gab'iel lay his trumpet down an' say,
"Who dat walkin' 'roun' so easy, down on earf ermong de dead?"—
'T will be Lizy up a-tu'nin' of de chillun in de bed.

A COQUETTE CONQUERED[1]

Yes, my ha't's ez ha'd ez stone—
Go 'way, Sam, an' lemme 'lone.
No; I ain't gwine change my min';
Ain't gwine ma'y you—nuffin' de kin'.

Phiny loves you true an' deah?
Go ma'y Phiny; whut I keer?
Oh, you needn't mou'n an' cry—
I don't keer how soon you die.

Got a present! What you got?
Somef'n fu' de pan er pot!
Huh! Yo' sass do sholy beat—
Think I don't git 'nough to eat?

Whut's dat un'neaf yo' coat?
Looks des lak a little shoat.
'Tain't no possum? Bless de Lamb!
Yes, it is, you rascal, Sam!

Gin it to me; whut you say?
Ain't you sma't! Oh, go 'way!
Possum do look mighty nice;
But you ax too big a price.

[1] From *Lyrics of Lowly Life.* Copyright, 1896, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

Tell me, is you talkin' true,
Dat's de gal's whut ma'ies you?
Come back, Sam; now whah's you gwine?
Co'se you knows dat possum's mine!

DISCOVERED [1]

Seen you down at chu'ch las' night,
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
What I mean? Oh, dat's all right,
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
You was sma't ez sma't could be,
But you couldn't hide f'om me.
Ain't I got two eyes to see!
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Guess you thought you's awful keen;
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Evahthing you done, I seen;
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Seen him tek yo' ahm jes' so,
When he got outside de do'—
Oh, I know dat man's yo' beau!
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Say now, honey, wa'd he say?—
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Keep yo' secrets—dat's yo' way—
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Won't tell me, an' I'm yo' pal!
I'm gwine tell his othah gal,—
Know huh, too; huh name is Sal.
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

[1] From *Lyrics of Lowly Life*. Copyright, 1896, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

Leonora Speyer was born in Washington, D. C., in 1872. On her mother's side, she is of New England stock; her father was Count Ferdinand von Stosch, a Prussian nobleman who fought for the Union in the Civil War, became an American citizen, lived and died here. As a girl, Leonora von Stosch was a professional violinist, playing with Nikisch, Anton Seidl and other famous conductors. Later, she married Sir Edgar Speyer who, before the World War, did much to bring modern European music to England. Since 1915, Mrs. Speyer has lived in New York City.

Although her husband had always written playlets for the entertainment of the family and had published a German translation of Keats' poems, Leonora Speyer had never written until 1915. For five years after that date, her verse appeared in various magazines and attracted no little attention. Her first volume, *A Canopic Jar*, appeared in 1921. Much of it was tentative and fumbling, much of it oversweet. But there was something clear and definite in such sonnets as "The Ladder" and even some of the free verse had a distinct personal turn. This pleasant impression is strengthened by Mrs. Speyer's subsequent work. The recent poems (from which the group here reprinted has been selected) show a firmer hand, a surer use of the material. A second volume, to contain these poems, is in preparation.

WHO IS THE PIONEER?

(*From "Of Mountains"*)

Who is the pioneer?
He is the follower here,
Perhaps the last
Of all who passed.

He does not fear nor scorn
To tread
The ventured path, the worn,
Of those ahead;

Nor shall he fail
To blaze his own brave trail
Along the beaten track,
Make of the old a newer way
Of stouter clay,
For others at his back.

He is the pioneer who climbs,
Who dares to climb,
His own high heart,
Although he fall
A thousand times;
Who dares to crawl
On bloody hands and knees
Along its stony ecstasies
Up to the utmost snows;
Nor knows
He stands on these! . . .
Or knowing, does not care,
Save to climb on from there!

Who is the pioneer?
He is the follower here,
Dogged and undeterred,
Perhaps the last
Of all who passed.

He passes too,
The heavy bird,
Limping along. . . .

Ah, but his song,
His song!

ITALIAN QUATRAINS

New Excavations

A workman with a spade in half a day
Can push two thousand lagging years away;
See, how the tragic villas, one by one,
Like drowsy lizards, creep into the sun.

Olive Tree

Moonlight is always on its leaves;
At noon there is a midnight air .
About its branches, that deceives
Lovers who chance to wander there.

Pompeii

They let me play at digging in that place,
Scoop ash from painted walls. . . . A girl's Greek face
Stared from the frieze. Between her and the skies
I hid the smoking mountain from her eyes!

PROTEST IN PASSING

This house of flesh was never loved of me,
Though I have known much love beneath its roof,
Always was I a guest who stood aloof,
Loth to accept such hospitality.
When the house slumbered, how I woke! for then
I knew of half-escapes along the night,
But now there comes a safer, swifter flight:
I go; nor need endure these rooms again.

I have been cowed too long by closed-in walls,
By masonry of muscle, blood and bone;
This quaking house of flesh that was my own,
High roof-tree of the heart, see how it falls!
I go . . . but pause upon the threshold's rust,
To shake from off my feet my own dead dust.

Guy Wetmore Carryl

Guy Wetmore Carryl, son of Charles Edward Carryl (see page 67), was born in New York City, March 4, 1873. He was graduated from Columbia University in 1895, was editor of *Munsey's Magazine,* 1895-6, and, during the time he lived abroad (from 1897 to 1902), was the foreign representative of various American publications.

As a writer of prose he was received with no little acclaim; his stories, *The Transgression of Andrew Vane* (1902) and *Zut and other Parisians* (1903), held the attention of a restless reading public. But it was as a writer of light verse that Carryl became preëminent. Inheriting a remarkable technical gift from his father, young Carryl soon surpassed him as well as all other rivals in the field of brilliantly rhymed, adroitly turned, burlesques.

Although he wrote several serious poems (the best of which have been collected in the posthumously published *The Garden of Years,* 1904), Carryl's most characteristic work is to be found in his perversions of the parables of Æsop, *Fables for the Frivolous* (1898), the topsy-turvy interpretations of old nursery rhymes, *Mother Goose for Grownups* (1900) and the fantastic variations on the fairy tales in *Grimm Tales Made Gay* (1903)—all of them with a surprising (and punning) Moral attached. Even those who scorn the gymnastics of most light verse usually succumb to the ease with which Carryl overcomes seemingly impossible hazards in the rhyme-leaping fable of the fox and the raven or the appalling pun-juggling in the new version of Puss-in-Boots.

This extraordinary versifier died, before reaching the height of his power, at the age of thirty-one, in the summer of 1904.

HOW JACK FOUND THAT BEANS MAY GO BACK ON A CHAP

Without the slightest basis
For hypochondriasis
  A widow had forebodings which a cloud around her flung,
And with expression cynical
For half the day a clinical
  Thermometer she held beneath her tongue.

Whene'er she read the papers
She suffered from the vapors,
  At every tale of malady or accident she'd groan;
In every new and smart disease,
From housemaid's knee to heart disease,
  She recognized the symptoms as her own!

She had a yearning chronic
To try each novel tonic,
  Elixir, panacea, lotion, opiate, and balm;
And from a homeopathist
Would change to an hydropathist,
  And back again, with stupefying calm!

She was nervous, cataleptic,
And anemic, and dyspeptic:
  Though not convinced of apoplexy, yet she had her fears.
She dwelt with force fanatical
Upon a twinge rheumatical,
  And said she had a buzzing in her ears!

Now all of this bemoaning
And this grumbling and this groaning
  The mind of Jack, her son and heir, unconscionably bored.
His heart completely hardening,
He gave his time to gardening,
  For raising beans was something he adored.

Each hour in accents morbid
This limp maternal bore bid
  Her callous son affectionate and lachrymose good-bys.
She never granted Jack a day
Without some long "Alackaday!"
  Accompanied by rolling of the eyes.

But Jack, no panic showing,
Just watched his beanstalk growing,
  And twined with tender fingers the tendrils up the pole.
At all her words funereal
He smiled a smile ethereal,
  Or sighed an absent-minded "Bless my soul!"

That hollow-hearted creature
Would never change a feature:
  No tear bedimmed his eye, however touching was her talk.
She never fussed or flurried him,
The only thing that worried him
  Was when no bean-pods grew upon the stalk!

But then he wabbled loosely
His head, and wept profusely,
  And, taking out his handkerchief to mop away his tears,
Exclaimed: "It hasn't got any!"
He found this blow to botany
  Was sadder than were all his mother's fears.

The Moral is that gardeners pine
Whene'er no pods adorn the vine.
Of all sad words experience gleans
The saddest are: "It *might* have beans."
  (I did not make this up myself:
  'Twas in a book upon my shelf.
  It's witty, but I don't deny
  It's rather Whittier than I!)

THE SYCOPHANTIC FOX AND THE GULLIBLE RAVEN

A raven sat upon a tree,
And not a word he spoke, for
His beak contained a piece of Brie,
Or, maybe, it was Roquefort.
We'll make it any kind you please—
At all events it was a cheese.

Beneath the tree's umbrageous limb
A hungry fox sat smiling;
He saw the raven watching him,
And spoke in words beguiling:
"J'admire," said he, "ton beau plumage,"
(The which was simply persiflage.)

Two things there are, no doubt you know,
To which a fox is used:
A rooster that is bound to crow,
A crow that's bound to roost;
And whichsoever he espies
He tells the most unblushing lies.

"Sweet fowl," he said, "I understand
You're more than merely natty,
I hear you sing to beat the band
And Adelina Patti.
Pray render with your liquid tongue
A bit from 'Götterdämmerung.' "

This subtle speech was aimed to please
The crow, and it succeeded;
He thought no bird in all the trees
Could sing as well as he did.
In flattery completely doused,
He gave the "Jewel Song" from "Faust."

But gravitation's law, of course,
As Isaac Newton showed it,
Exerted on the cheese its force,
And elsewhere soon bestowed it.
In fact, there is no need to tell
What happened when to earth it fell.

I blush to add that when the bird
Took in the situation
He said one brief, emphatic word,
Unfit for publication.
The fox was greatly startled, but
He only sighed and answered "Tut."

The Moral is: A fox is bound
To be a shameless sinner.
And also: When the cheese comes round
You know it's after dinner.
But (what is only known to few)
The fox is after dinner, too.

HOW A CAT WAS ANNOYED AND A POET WAS BOOTED

A poet had a cat.
There is nothing odd in that—
(I *might* make a little pun about the *Mews!*)
But what is really more
Remarkable, she wore
A pair of pointed patent-leather shoes.
And I doubt me greatly whether
You have heard the like of that:
Pointed shoes of patent-leather
On a cat!

His time he used to pass
Writing sonnets, on the grass—
(I *might* say something good on *pen* and *sward!*)
While the cat sat near at hand,
Trying hard to understand
The poems he occasionally roared.
(I myself possess a feline,
But when poetry I roar
He is sure to make a bee-line
For the door.)

The poet, cent by cent,
All his patrimony spent—
(I *might* tell how he went from *verse* to *worse!*)
Till the cat was sure she could,
By advising, do him good.
So addressed him in a manner that was terse:
"We are bound toward the scuppers,
And the time has come to act,
Or we'll both be on our uppers
For a fact!"

On her boot she fixed her eye,
But the boot made no reply—
(I *might* say: "Couldn't speak to save its *sole!*")
And the foolish bard, instead
Of responding, only read
A verse that wasn't bad upon the whole.
And it pleased the cat so greatly,
Though she knew not what it meant,
That I'll quote approximately
How it went:—

"If I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree"—
(*I might* put in: "I think I'd just as *leaf!*")
"Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough"—

Well, he'd plagiarized it bodily, in brief!
But that cat of simple breeding
Couldn't read the lines between,
So she took it to a leading
Magazine.

She was jarred and very sore
When they showed her to the door.
(I *might* hit off the *door* that was a *jar!*)
To the spot she swift returned
Where the poet sighed and yearned,
And she told him that he'd gone a little far.
"Your performance with this rhyme has
Made me absolutely sick,"
She remarked. "I think the time has
Come to kick!"

I could fill up half the page
With descriptions of her rage—
(I *might* say that she went a bit *too fur!*)
When he smiled and murmured: "Shoo!"
"There is one thing I can do!"
She answered with a wrathful kind of purr.
"You may shoo me, an' it suit you,
But I feel my conscience bid
Me, as tit for tat, to boot you!"
(Which she did.)

The Moral of the plot
(Though I say it, as should not!)
Is: An editor is difficult to suit.
But again there're other times
When the man who fashions rhymes
Is a rascal, and a bully one to boot!

Harry Herbert Knibbs was born at Niagara Falls, October 24, 1874. After a desultory schooling, he attended Harvard for three years when he was thirty-four. "Somebody said I took honors in English," says Knibbs, "but I never saw them." He wrote his first book, *Lost Farm Camp,* a novel, as a class exercise.

Half a dozen volumes followed, *Overland Red* (1914) and *Tang of Life* (1917) being the most popular. In 1911 Knibbs settled in Los Angeles, California, where he has lived ever since. *Temescal,* in many ways his best tale, appeared in 1925.

In *Riders of the Stars* (1916) and *Songs of the Trail* (1920) Knibbs carries on the tradition of Bret Harte and the Pike County Ballads. High-hearted verse this is, with more than an occasional flash of poetry. To the typical Western breeziness, Knibbs adds a wider whimsicality, a rough-shod but nimble imagination. Knibbs, far more accurately than Service, sings the rough-edged, horny-handed ballad of the pioneer; he is the singer of the ranch, the temporary camp, the uncertain trail. He can express courage without heroics.

THE VALLEY THAT GOD FORGOT

Out in the desert spaces, edged by a hazy blue,
Davison sought the faces of the long-lost friends he knew:
They were there, in the distance dreaming
Their dreams that were worn and old;
They were there, to his frenzied seeming,
Still burrowing down for gold.

Davison's face was leather; his mouth was a swollen blot,
His mind was a floating feather, in The Valley That God Forgot;
Wild as a dog gone loco,
Or sullen or meek, by turns,
He mumbled a "Poco! Poco!"
And whispered of pools and ferns.

Gold! Why his, for the finding! But water was never found
Save in deep caverns winding miles through the underground:
Cool, far, shadowy places
Edged by the mirrored trees,
When—Davison saw the faces!
And fear let loose his knees.

There was Shorty who owed him money, and Billing who bossed the crowd;
And Steve whom the boys called "Sunny," and Collins who talked so loud:
Miguel with the handsome daughter,
And the rustler, Ed McCray;
Five—and they begged for water,
And offered him gold, in pay.

Gold? It was never cheaper. And Davison shook his head:
"The price of a drink is steeper out here than in town," he said.
He laughed as they mouthed and muttered
Through lips that were cracked and dried;
The pulse in his ear-drum fluttered:
"I'm through with the game!" he cried.

"I'm through!" And he knelt and fumbled the cap of his dry canteen
Then, rising, he swayed and stumbled into a black ravine:
His ghostly comrades followed,
For Davison's end was near,
And a shallow grave they hollowed,
When up from it, cool and clear

Bubbled the water—hidden a pick-stroke beneath the sand;
Davison, phantom-ridden, scooped with a shaking hand . . .

Davison swears they made it,
The Well where we drank to-day.
Davison's game? He played it
And won—so the town-folk say:

Called it The Morning-Glory—near those abandoned
stamps,
And Davison's crazy story was told in a hundred camps:
Time and the times have tamed it,
His yarn—and this desert spot,
But I'm strong for the man who named it,
The Valley That God Forgot.

ROLL A ROCK DOWN

Oh, out in the West where the riders are ready,
They sing an old song and they tell an old tale,
And its moral is plain: Take it easy, go steady,
While riding a horse on the Malibu Trail.

It's a high, rocky trail with its switch-backs and doubles,
It has no beginning and never an end:
It's risky and rough and it's plumb full of troubles,
From Shifty—that's shale—up to Powder Cut Bend.

Old-timers will tell you the rangers who made it,
Sang "Roll A Rock Down," with a stiff upper lip,
And cussed all creation, but managed to grade it;
With a thousand-foot drop if a pony should slip.

Oh, the day it was wet and the sky it was cloudy,
The trail was as slick as an oil-rigger's pants,
When Ranger McCabe on his pony, Old Rowdy,
Came ridin' where walkin' was takin' a chance.

"Oh, Roll A Rock Down!" picks and shovels was clangin',
And Rowdy a-steppin' that careful and light,
When the edge it gave way and McCabe was left hangin'
Clean over the rim—with no bottom in sight.

I shook out a loop—bein' crowded for throwin';
I flipped a fair noose for a rope that was wet:
It caught just as Mac lost his holt and was goin',
And burned through my fingers: it's burnin' them yet.

For Ranger McCabe never knuckled to danger;
My pardner in camp, on the trail, or in town:
And he slid into glory, a true forést-ranger,
With: "Hell! I'm a-goin'! Just roll a rock down."

So, roll a rock down where a ranger is sleepin'
Aside of his horse below Powder Cut Bend:
I ride and I look where the shadows are creepin',
And roll a rock down—for McCabe was my friend.

I've sung you my song and I've told you my story,
And all that I ask when I'm done with the show,
Is, roll a rock down when I slide into glory,
And say that I went like a ranger should go.

Anna Hempstead Branch

Anna Hempstead Branch was born at New London, Connecticut. She was graduated from Smith College in 1897 and has devoted herself to literature ever since.

Her two chief volumes, *The Shoes That Danced* (1905) and *Rose of the Wind* (1910), reveal the lyrist, but they show a singer who is less fanciful than philosophic. Often, indeed, Miss Branch weighs down her simple melodies with a heavy intellectuality, but, even more often, she attains a high level of lyricism. Her lines are admirably condensed, rich in personal value as well as poetic divination; they maintain a high and austere level. A typical poem

is "The Monk in the Kitchen," which, with its spiritual loveliness and verbal felicity, is a celebration of cleanness that gives order an almost mystical nobility.

Although nothing she has ever written has attained the popularity of her shorter works, "Nimrod" has an epic sweep, a large movement which, within the greater curve, contains many moments of exalted imagery. The deeply religious feeling implicit in this work governs the author as a person no less than as a poet, Miss Branch having given a great part of her life to settlement work on the East Side of New York.

THE MONK IN THE KITCHEN

I

Order is a lovely thing;
On disarray it lays its wing,
Teaching simplicity to sing.
It has a meek and lowly grace,
Quiet as a nun's face.
Lo—I will have thee in this place!
Tranquil well of deep delight,
All things that shine through thee appear
As stones through water, sweetly clear.
Thou clarity,
That with angelic charity
Revealest beauty where thou art,
Spread thyself like a clean pool.
Then all the things that in thee are,
Shall seem more spiritual and fair,
Reflection from serener air—
Sunken shapes of many a star
In the high heavens set afar.

II

Ye stolid, homely, visible things,
Above you all brood glorious wings

Of your deep entities, set high,
Like slow moons in a hidden sky.
But you, their likenesses, are spent
Upon another element.
Truly ye are but seemings—
The shadowy cast-off gleamings
Of bright solidities. Ye seem
Soft as water, vague as dream;
Image, cast in a shifting stream.

III

What are ye?
I know not.
Brazen pan and iron pot,
Yellow brick and gray flagstone
That my feet have trod upon—
Ye seem to me
Vessels of bright mystery
For ye do bear a shape, and so
Though ye were made by man, I know
An inner Spirit also made,
And ye his breathings have obeyed.

IV

Shape, the strong and awful Spirit,
Laid his ancient hand on you.
He waste chaos doth inherit;
He can alter and subdue.
Verily, he doth lift up
Matter, like a sacred cup.
Into deep substance he reached, and lo!
Where ye were not, ye were; and so
Out of useless nothing, ye
Groaned and laughed and came to be,
And I use you, as I can,
Wonderful uses, made for man,
Iron pot and brazen pan.

V

What are ye?
I know not;
Nor what I really do
When I move and govern you.
There is no small work unto God.
He required of us greatness;
Of his least creature
A high angelic nature,
Stature superb and bright completeness.
He sets to us no humble duty.
Each act that he would have us do
Is haloed round with strangest beauty;
Terrific deeds and cosmic tasks
Of his plainest child he asks.
When I polish the brazen pan
I hear a creature laugh afar
In the gardens of a star,
And from his burning presence run
Flaming wheels of many a sun.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
When I cleanse this earthen floor
My spirit leaps to see
Bright garments trailing over it,
A cleanness made by me.
Purger of all men's thoughts and ways,
With labor do I sound Thy praise,
My work is done for Thee.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
Therefore let me spread abroad
The beautiful cleanness of my God.

VI

One time in the cool of dawn
Angels came and worked with me.

The air was soft with many a wing.
They laughed amid my solitude
And cast bright looks on everything.
Sweetly of me did they ask
That they might do my common task.
And all were beautiful—but one
With garments whiter than the sun
Had such a face
Of deep, remembered grace;
That when I saw I cried—"Thou art
The great Blood-Brother of my heart.
Where have I seen thee?"—And he said,
"When we are dancing round God's throne,
How often thou art there.
Beauties from thy hands have flown
Like white doves wheeling in mid-air.
Nay—thy soul remembers not?
Work on, and cleanse thy iron pot."

VII

What are we? I know not.

WHILE LOVELINESS GOES BY

Sometimes when all the world seems grey and dun
And nothing beautiful, a voice will cry,
"Look out, look out! Angels are drawing nigh!"
Then my slow burdens leave me one by one,
And swiftly does my heart arise and run
Even like a child while loveliness goes by—
And common folk seem children of the sky,
And common things seem shapèd of the sun,
Oh, pitiful! that I who love them, must
So soon perceive their shining garments fade!

And slowly, slowly, from my eyes of trust
Their flaming banners sink into a shade!
While this earth's sunshine seems the golden dust
Slow settling from that radiant cavalcade.

Amy Lowell

Amy Lowell was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, February 9, 1874, of a long line of noted publicists and poets, the first colonist (a Percival Lowell) arriving in Newburyport in 1637. James Russell Lowell was a cousin of her grandfather; Abbott Lawrence, her mother's father, was minister to England; Percival Lowell, the astronomer who "charted" the canals on Mars, was a brother; and Abbott Lawrence Lowell, her other brother, is president of Harvard University.

Miss Lowell obtained her early education through private tuition and travel abroad. These European journeys were the background upon which much of Miss Lowell's later work is unconsciously woven; her visits to France, Egypt, Turkey and Greece bore fruit, many years later, in the exotic colors of her verse. As a young girl, she had vague aspirations toward being a writer; but it was not until 1902, when she was twenty-eight years old, that she definitely determined to be a poet. For eight years she served a rigorous and solitary apprenticeship, reading the classics of all schools and countries, studying the technique of verse, exercising her verbal gifts—but never attempting to publish a single line. In 1910 her first verse was printed in *The Atlantic Monthly;* two years later her first book appeared.

This volume, *A Dome of Many-colored Glass* (1912), was a strangely unpromising first book. The subjects were as conventional as the treatment; the influence of Keats and Tennyson was evident; the tone was soft and sentimental, almost without a trace of personality. It was a queer prologue to the vivid *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914), which marked not only an extraordinary advance but a totally new individuality. This second volume contained many distinctive poems written in the usual forms, a score of pictorial pieces illustrating Miss Lowell's identification with the Imagists (see Preface) and, possibly most important from a tech-

nical standpoint, the first appearance in English of "polyphonic prose." Of this extremely flexible form, which has only begun to be exploited, Miss Lowell, in an essay on John Gould Fletcher, has written, "'Polyphonic' means 'many-voiced,' and the form is so-called because it makes use of the 'voices' of poetry, namely: meter, *vers libre,* assonance, alliteration, rhyme and return. It employs every form of rhythm, even prose rhythm at times."

It was because of such experiments in form and technique that Miss Lowell first attracted attention and is still best known. But, beneath her preoccupation with theories and novelty of utterance, one listens to the skilled story-teller, to the designer of arabesques, to the narrator who (*vide* such poems as "A Lady," "Vintage" and the later "Bronze Horses") revivifies history with creative excitement.

Men, Women and Ghosts (1916) brims with this contagious vitality; it is richer in variety than its predecessors, swifter in movement, surer in artistry. It is, in common with all of Miss Lowell's work, best in its portrayal of colors and sounds, of physical perceptions rather than the reactions of emotional experience. She is, preëminently, the poet of the external world; her visual effects are as "hard and clear" as the most uncompromising Imagist could desire. The colors with which her works are studded seem like bits of bright enamel; every leaf and flower has a lacquered brilliance. To compensate for the lack of inner warmth, Miss Lowell feverishly agitates all she touches; nothing remains quiescent. Whether she writes about a fruit shop, or a flower-garden in Roxbury, or a windowful of red slippers, or a string quartet, or a Japanese print—everything flashes, leaps, startles, spins and burns with an almost savage intensity; a dynamic speed dizzies one. Motion frequently takes the place of emotion.

In *Can Grande's Castle* (1918) Miss Lowell achieves a broader line; the teller of stories, the bizarre decorator and the experimenter are finally fused. The poems in this volume are only four in number—four polyphonic prose-poems of almost epic length, but they are extraordinarily varied, sweeping in their sense of amplitude and time. *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919) which followed is, in many ways, Miss Lowell's most personal revelation. Although there are several pages devoted to the merely dazzling and grotesque, most of the poems are in a quieter key; a new restraint gives unsuspected overtones to stanzas that have

much in common with the earlier and more famous "Patterns" where the narrative, the character and the thing observed are inextricably knit.

Legends (1921) is a volume closely related to *Can Grande's Castle*. Here are eleven stories placed against seven different backgrounds. All of them are as unusual as what the reader had come to expect of Miss Lowell; the first one must be rated among her most dazzling achievements: a *tour de force* with colors as strange and metallic as the scene it pictures. As in her previous books, this poet made even the most casual scene an adventure in excitement.

Miss Lowell's more recent poetry established a closer kinship with her backgrounds. Less experimental than her previous verse, such poems as "Meeting-House Hill" and "Lilacs" (to be included in *What's O'Clock?,* which will be published in the fall of 1925) are as tartly native as the essays of Emerson; it is *her* New England, as she claims in "Lilacs," because her roots are in it.

Besides Miss Lowell's original poetry, she undertook many studies in foreign literatures; she made the English versions of the poems translated from the Chinese by Florence Ayscough in the vivid *Fir-Flower Tablets* (1921). She also wrote two volumes of critical essays: *Six French Poets* (1915) and *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917), both of them being invaluable aids to the student of contemporary literature. Two years after its publication she acknowledged the authorship of the anonymous *A Critical Fable* (1922), a modern sequel to James Russell Lowell's *A Fable for Critics.* Her monumental *John Keats,* an exhaustive biography and analysis of the poet in two volumes, appeared early in 1925.

For years Miss Lowell had been suffering from ill health; she had been operated upon several times, but her general condition as well as her continual desire to work, nullified the effects of the operations. In April, 1925, her condition became worse; she was forced to cancel a projected lecture trip through England and to cease all work. Fortunately, she had just finished preparing for the press the contents of her posthumous volume *What's O'Clock?* She died as the result of an unexpected paralytic stroke on May 12, 1925. Her death was the occasion of a salvo of nation-wide tributes. The very journals which had ridiculed and fought her during her life were loudest in her praise. A few editorials main-

tained that her personality was more forceful and impressive than her work; the great majority, however, agreed that hers was one of the most daring and picturesque figures in contemporary literature. Like all pioneers, she was the target of scorn and hostility; but, unlike most innovators, she lived to see her experiments rise from the limbo of ridicule to the definite place which they have assumed.

A LADY[1]

You are beautiful and faded,
Like an old opera tune
Played upon a harpsichord;
Or like the sun-flooded silks
Of an eighteenth-century boudoir.
In your eyes
Smoulder the fallen roses of outlived minutes,
And the perfume of your soul
Is vague and suffusing,
With the pungence of sealed spice-jars.
Your half-tones delight me,
And I grow mad with gazing
At your blent colors.

My vigor is a new-minted penny,
Which I cast at your feet.
Gather it up from the dust
That its sparkle may amuse you.

SOLITAIRE

When night drifts along the streets of the city,
And sifts down between the uneven roofs,

[1] All the poems by Amy Lowell are used by permission of, and special arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

My mind begins to peek and peer.
It plays at ball in odd, blue Chinese gardens,
And shakes wrought dice-cups in Pagan temples
Amid the broken flutings of white pillars.
It dances with purple and yellow crocuses in its hair,
And its feet shine as they flutter over drenched grasses.
How light and laughing my mind is,
When all good folk have put out their bedroom candles,
And the city is still.

PATTERNS

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden-paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whalebone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze

As they please.
And I weep;
For the lime-tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden-paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.
What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword-hilt and the buckles on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover.
Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me,
Aching, melting, unafraid.
With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon—
I am very like to swoon

With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun sifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.
"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday se'nnight."
As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.
"Any answer, Madam," said my footman.
"No," I told him.
"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer."
And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.
I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown;
Up and down I walked,
Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
We would have broke the pattern;
He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady,
On this shady seat.
He had a whim
That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden-paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.
I shall go
Up and down
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace
By each button, hook, and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?

WIND AND SILVER

Greatly shining,
The Autumn moon floats in the thin sky;
And the fish-ponds shake their backs and flash their dragon scales
As she passes over them.

NIGHT CLOUDS

The white mares of the moon rush along the sky
Beating their golden hoofs upon the glass Heavens;
The white mares of the moon are all standing on their hind legs
Pawing at the green porcelain doors of the remote Heavens.
Fly, mares!
Strain your utmost,

Scatter the milky dust of stars,
Or the tiger sun will leap upon you and destroy you
With one lick of his vermilion tongue.

FREE FANTASIA ON JAPANESE THEMES

All the afternoon there has been a chirping of birds,
And the sun lies warm and still on the western sides of
swollen branches,
There is no wind;
Even the little twigs at the ends of the branches do not move,
And the needles of the pines are solid
Bands of inarticulated blackness
Against the blue-white sky,
Still, but alert;
And my heart is still and alert,
Passive with sunshine,
Avid of adventure.

I would experience new emotions,
Submit to strange enchantments,
Bend to influences
Bizarre, exotic,
Fresh with burgeoning.

I would climb a sacred mountain
Struggle with other pilgrims up a steep path through pine-
trees,
Above to the smooth, treeless slopes,
And prostrate myself before a painted shrine,
Beating my hands upon the hot earth,
Quieting my eyes upon the distant sparkle
Of the faint spring sea.

I would recline upon a balcony
In purple curving folds of silk,

And my dress should be silvered with a pattern
Of butterflies and swallows,
And the black band of my *obi*
Should flash with gold circular threads,
And glitter when I moved.
I would lean against the railing
While you sang to me of wars
Past and to come—
Sang, and played the samisen.
Perhaps I would beat a little hand drum
In time to your singing;
Perhaps I would only watch the play of light
Upon the hilt of your two swords.

I would sit in a covered boat,
Rocking slowly to the narrow waves of a river,
While above us, an arc of moving lanterns,
Curved a bridge,
A hiss of gold
Blooming out of darkness,
Rockets exploded,
And died in a soft dripping of colored stars.
We would float between the high trestles,
And drift away from other boats,
Until the rockets flared soundless,
And their falling stars hung silent in the sky,
Like wistaria clusters above the ancient entrance of a temple.

I would anything
Rather than this cold paper;
With outside, the quiet sun on the sides of burgeoning branches,
And inside, only my books.

MADONNA OF THE EVENING FLOWERS

All day long I have been working,
Now I am tired.
I call: "Where are you?"
But there is only the oak tree rustling in the wind.
The house is very quiet,
The sun shines in on your books,
On your scissors and thimble just put down,
But you are not there.
Suddenly I am lonely:
Where are you?
I go about searching.

Then I see you,
Standing under a spire of pale blue larkspur,
With a basket of roses on your arm.
You are cool, like silver,
And you smile.

I think the Canterbury bells are playing little tunes,
You tell me that the peonies need spraying,
That the columbines have overrun all bounds,
That the pyrus japonica should be cut back and rounded.
You tell me these things.
But I look at you, heart of silver,
White heart-flame of polished silver,
Burning beneath the blue steeples of the larkspur,
And I long to kneel instantly at your feet,
While all about us peal the loud, sweet *Te Deums* of the
Canterbury bells.

A DECADE

When you came, you were like red wine and honey,
And the taste of you burnt my mouth with its sweetness.

Now you are like morning bread,
Smooth and pleasant.
I hardly taste you at all, for I know your savour;
But I am completely nourished.

MEETING-HOUSE HILL

I must be mad, or very tired,
When the curve of a blue bay beyond a railroad track
Is shrill and sweet to me like the sudden springing of a tune,
And the sight of a white church above thin trees in a city square
Amazes my eyes as though it were the Parthenon.
Clear, reticent, superbly final,
With the pillars of its portico refined to a cautious elegance,
It dominates the weak trees,
And the shot of its spire
Is cool and candid,
Rising into an unresisting sky.
Strange meeting-house
Pausing a moment upon a squalid hill-top.
I watch the spire sweeping the sky,
I am dizzy with the movement of the sky;
I might be watching a mast
With its royals set full
Straining before a two-reef breeze.
I might be sighting a tea-clipper,
Tacking into the blue bay,
Just back from Canton
With her hold full of green and blue porcelain
And a Chinese coolie leaning over the rail
Gazing at the white spire
With dull, sea-spent eyes.

LILACS

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Color of lilac,
Your great puffs of flowers
Are everywhere in this my New England.
Among your heart-shaped leaves
Orange orioles hop like music-box birds and sing
Their little weak soft songs;
In the crooks of your branches
The bright eyes of song sparrows sitting on spotted eggs
Peer restlessly through the light and shadow
Of all Springs.
Lilacs in dooryards
Holding quiet conversations with an early moon;
Lilacs watching a deserted house
Settling sideways into the grass of an old road;
Lilacs, wind-beaten, staggering under a lopsided shock of bloom
Above a cellar dug into a hill.
You are everywhere.
You were everywhere.
You tapped the window when the preacher preached his sermon,
And ran along the road beside the boy going to school.
You stood by pasture-bars to give the cows good milking,
You persuaded the housewife that her dish-pan was of silver
And her husband an image of pure gold.
You flaunted the fragrance of your blossoms
Through the wide doors of Custom Houses—
You, and sandalwood, and tea,
Charging the noses of quill-driving clerks
When a ship was in from China.

You called to them: "Goose-quill men, goose-quill men,
May is a month for flitting,"
Until they writhed on their high stools
And wrote poetry on their letter-sheets behind the propped-up ledgers.
Paradoxical New England clerks,
Writing inventories in ledgers, reading the "Song of Solomon" at night,
So many verses before bedtime,
Because it was the Bible.
The dead fed you
Amid the slant stones of graveyards.
Pale ghosts who planted you
Came in the night time
And let their thin hair blow through your clustered stems.
You are of the green sea,
And of the stone hills which reach a long distance.
You are of elm-shaded streets with little shops where they sell kites and marbles,
You are of great parks where every one walks and nobody is at home.
You cover the blind sides of greenhouses
And lean over the top to say a hurry-word through the glass
To your friends, the grapes, inside.

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Color of lilac,
You have forgotten your Eastern origin,
The veiled women with eyes like panthers,
The swollen, aggressive turbans of jeweled Pashas.
Now you are a very decent flower,
A reticent flower,
A curiously clear-cut, candid flower,
Standing beside clean doorways,

Friendly to a house-cat and a pair of spectacles,
Making poetry out of a bit of moonlight
And a hundred or two sharp blossoms.

Maine knows you,
Has for years and years;
New Hampshire knows you,
And Massachusetts
And Vermont.
Cape Cod starts you along the beaches to Rhode Island;
Connecticut takes you from a river to the sea.
You are brighter than apples,
Sweeter than tulips,
You are the great flood of our souls
Bursting above the leaf-shapes of our hearts,
You are the smell of all Summers,
The love of wives and children,
The recollection of the gardens of little children,
You are State Houses and Charters
And the familiar treading of the foot to and fro on a road
it knows.
May is lilac here in New England,
May is a thrush singing "Sun up!" on a tip-top ash-tree,
May is white clouds behind pine-trees
Puffed out and marching upon a blue sky.
May is a green as no other,
May is much sun through small leaves,
May is soft earth,
And apple-blossoms,
And windows open to a South wind.
May is a full light wind of lilac
From Canada to Narragansett Bay.

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,

Color of lilac,
Heart-leaves of lilac all over New England,
Roots of lilac under all the soil of New England,
Lilac in me because I am New England,
Because my roots are in it,
Because my leaves are of it,
Because my flowers are for it,
Because it is my country
And I speak to it of itself
And sing of it with my own voice
Since certainly it is mine.

Ridgely Torrence

(Frederic) Ridgely Torrence was born at Xenia, Ohio, November 27, 1875, and was educated at Miami and Princeton University. For several years he was librarian of the Astor Library in New York City (1897-1901), later assuming an editorial position on the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. At present he is the poetry editor of *The New Republic*.

His first volume, *The House of a Hundred Lights* (1900), bears the grave subtitle "A Psalm of Experience after Reading a Couplet of Bidpai" and is a half-whimsical, half-searching hodge-podge of philosophy, love lyrics, artlessness and impudence. The influence of Omar Khayyám and Richard Hovey is apparent but not too dominant; Torrence saves himself on the very verge of sentimentality and rhetoric by a chuckle, an adroit right-about-face.

It was not until a quarter of a century later that Torrence published his second volume of verse. In the meantime, poems of his had attracted immediate attention upon their appearance in magazines and a few of his lyrics had been quoted so often that they had become contemporary classics. But Torrence remained in the peculiar position of one whose poetry was known only through the anthologies, his own verse being not only unprocurable, but unprinted. *Hesperides* (1925) remedied this strange circumstance. Like his first volume, this is not a large book—Torrence is not a voluminous writer—but in these one hundred pages is contained some of the most definite and distinguished poetry of the day.

There is not a mediocre passage, not one strained epithet in this collection. In *Hesperides* one finds the magnificent "Eye-Witness," that most original treatment of the theme of Christ's second coming, the purely lyrical "The Singers in a Cloud" and that brief epic, "The Bird and the Tree" which is as famous as it is stirring.

An entire column might be written concerning Torrence's firm clarity of thought and phrase. Practically every anthology of the period contains "The Son." And yet it is doubtful whether most of the readers of its sixteen lines are aware of the artistry which has crowded the tragedy of a lifetime into so brilliant a condensation. Every casual line makes the revelation greater; every word is as starkly dramatic as it is inevitable. In the other poems, Torrence's technique, though not ostentatious or dazzling, is sufficiently flexible; it loses none of the poet's nobilities of thought. *Hesperides* will silence those who have been talking of Torrence in terms of promise. This is an achievement—one which will undoubtedly loom high among the finer works of the period.

Between Torrence's earliest and most recent volume, three of his plays were published: *El Dorado* (1903), *Abelard and Héloise* (1907), and *Granny Maumee, The Rider of Dreams, Simon the Cyrenian* (1917). The last group, being three plays for a Negro theatre, contains the best of Torrence's dramatic writing. He has caught here, particularly in *Granny Maumee* and *The Rider of Dreams,* something of that high color which the Negro himself is only beginning to reflect.

THE BIRD AND THE TREE[1]

Blackbird, blackbird in the cage,
There's something wrong to-night.
Far off the sheriff's footfall dies,
The minutes crawl like last year's flies
Between the bars, and like an age
The hours are long to-night.

The sky is like a heavy lid
Out here beyond the door to-night.

[1] Compare the poem on the same subject on page 131.

What's that? A mutter down the street.
What's that? The sound of yells and feet.
For what you didn't do or did
You'll pay the score to-night.

No use to reek with reddened sweat,
No use to whimper and to sweat.
They've got the rope; they've got the guns,
They've got the courage and the guns;
An' that's the reason why to-night
No use to ask them any more.
They'll fire the answer through the door—
You're out to die to-night.

There where the lonely cross-road lies,
There is no place to make replies;
But silence, inch by inch, is there,
And the right limb for a lynch is there;
And a lean daw waits for both your eyes,
Blackbird.

Perhaps you'll meet again some place.
Look for the mask upon the face;
That's the way you'll know them there—
A white mask to hide the face.
And you can halt and show them there
The things that they are deaf to now,
And they can tell you what they meant—
To wash the blood with blood. But how
If you are innocent?

Blackbird singer, blackbird mute,
They choked the seed you might have found.
Out of a thorny field you go—
For you it may be better so—
And leave the sowers of the ground
To eat the harvest of the fruit,
Blackbird.

THE SON

(*Southern Ohio Market Town*)

I heard an old farm-wife,
Selling some barley,
Mingle her life with life
And the name "Charley."

Saying: "The crop's all in,
We're about through now;
Long nights will soon begin,
We're just us two now.

"Twelve bushels at sixty cents,
It's all I carried—
He sickened making fence;
He was to be married—

"It feels like frost was near—
His hair was curly.
The spring was late that year,
But the harvest early."

Robert Frost

Although known as the chief interpreter of New England, Robert (Lee) Frost was born in San Francisco, California, March 26, 1875. At the age of ten he came East to the towns and hills where, for eight generations, his forefathers had lived. After graduating from the high school at Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1892, Frost entered Dartmouth College, where he remained only a few months. The routine of study was too much for him and, hoping to keep his mind free for creative work, he decided to earn his living and became a bobbin boy in one of the mills at Lawrence. He had already begun to write poetry; a few of his verses

had appeared in *The Independent.* But the strange soil-flavored quality which even then distinguished his lines was not relished by the editors, and the very magazines to which he sent poems that today are famous rejected his verse with amazing unanimity. For twenty years Frost continued to write his highly characteristic work in spite of the discouraging apathy, and for twenty years the poet remained unknown.

In 1897, two years after his marriage, Frost moved his family to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and entered Harvard in a final determination to achieve culture. This time he followed the cut-and-dried curriculum for two years, but at the end of that period he stopped trying to learn and started to teach. For three years he taught school, made shoes, edited a weekly paper, and in 1900 became a farmer at Derry, New Hampshire. During the next eleven years Frost labored to wrest a living from the stubborn rocky hills with scant success. Loneliness claimed him for its own; the ground refused to give him a living; the literary world continued to remain oblivious of his existence. Frost sought a change of environment and, after a few years' teaching at Derry and Plymouth, New Hampshire, sold his farm and, with his wife and four children, sailed for England in September, 1912.

For the first time in his life, Frost moved in a literary world. London was a hot-bed of poets; groups merged, dissolved and separated over night; controversy and creation were in the air. Frost took his collection of poems to a publisher with few hopes, went back to the suburban town of Beaconsfield and turned to other matters. A few months later *A Boy's Will* (1913), his first collection, was published and Frost was recognized at once as one of the few authentic voices of modern poetry.

A Boy's Will, unlike the later volumes, is frankly subjective; original in outlook in spite of certain reminiscences of Browning. In *A Boy's Will* Frost is not yet completely in possession of his own idiom; but the *timbre* is recognizably his. No one but Frost could have written "Reluctance" or "The Tuft of Flowers." Chiefly lyrical, this volume, lacking the concentrated emotion of his subsequent works, is a significant introduction to the following book, which has become an international classic. Early in 1914, Frost leased a small place in Gloucestershire, his neighbors being the poets Lascelles Abercrombie and W. W. Gibson. In the spring of the same year, *North of Boston* (1914), one of the most in-

tensely American books ever printed, was published in England. (See Preface.) This is, as he has called it, a "book of people." And it is more than that—it is a book of backgrounds as living and dramatic as the people they overshadow. Frost vivifies a stone wall, an empty cottage, a grindstone, a mountain, a forgotten wood-pile left

> To warm the frozen swamp as best it could
> With the slow, smokeless burning of decay.

North of Boston, like its successor, contains much of the finest poetry of our time. Rich in its actualities, richer in its spiritual values, every line moves with the double force of observation and implication. The very first poem in the book illustrates this power of character and symbolism. Although Frost is not arguing for anything in particular, one senses here something more than the subterranean enemies of walls. In "Mending Wall," we see two elemental and opposed forces. "Something there is that doesn't love a wall," insists the seeker after causes; "Good fences make good neighbors," doggedly replies the literal-minded lover of traditions. Here, beneath the whimsical turns and pungency of expression, we have the essence of nationalism versus the internationalist: the struggle, though the poet would be the last to prod the point, between a blind responsibility and a pagan iconoclasm.

So with all of Frost's characters. Like the worn-out incompetent in "The Death of the Hired Man" (one of the finest *genre* pictures of our time), or the autobiographical country boy "climbing black branches up a snow white trunk toward heaven" in "Birches," or the positive, tight-lipped old lady in "The Black Cottage," his people are always intensified through the poet's circumlocutory but precise psychology. They remain close to their soil. Frost's monologs and dramatic idyls, written in a conversational blank verse, establish the connection between the vernacular and the language of literature; they remain rooted in realism. But Frost is never a photographic realist. "There are," he once said, "two types of realist—the one who offers a good deal of dirt with his potato to show that it is a real one; and the one who is satisfied with the potato brushed clean. I'm inclined to the second kind. . . . To me, the thing that art does for life is to clean it, to strip it to form."

In March, 1915, Frost came back to America—to a hill outside

of Franconia, New Hampshire. *North of Boston* had been published in the United States and its author, who had left the country an unknown writer, returned to find himself famous. *Mountain Interval,* containing some of Frost's most beautiful poems ("Birches," and "An Old Man's Winter Night" are typical), appeared in 1916. The idiom is the same as in the earlier volumes, but the notes are more varied, the sense of assurance is stronger. The essential things are unchanged. The first poem in Frost's first book sums it up:

> They would not find me changed from him they knew—
> Only more sure of all I thought was true.

The subtle variations of the tones of speech find their most sympathetic reporter here. And the lines disclose the most delicate shades of emphasis in the way they present an entire scene by giving only a significant detail. Altogether natural, yet more fanciful than realistic, this poetry escapes labels, "but," Frost once said, with a suspicion of a twinkle, "if I must be classified as a poet, I might be called a Synecdochist; for I prefer the synecdoche in poetry—that figure of speech in which we use a part for the whole."

New Hampshire (1923), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the best volume of poetry published in 1923, synthesizes Frost's qualities: it combines the stark unity of *North of Boston* and the diffused geniality of *Mountain Interval.* If any one thing predominates, it is a feeling of quiet classicism; the poet has lowered his voice but not the strength of his convictions. To say, as has been said so often, that Frost gives us a poetry "without the delight of the senses, without the glow of warm feeling" is—particularly when faced with New Hampshire—to utter an absurdity. Frost, in spite of a superficial underemphasis, does not hesitate to declare his close affection. Such poems as "Two Look at Two," with its tremendous wave of love, "To Earthward," with its unreserved intensity, even the brilliantly condensed "Fire and Ice," with its candidly registered passion—all these brim with a physical radiance, with the very delight and pain of the senses. Nor is the fanciful by-play, the sly banter so characteristic of this poet, absent from his latest volume. Who but Frost could put so whimsical an accent in the farewell to an orchard entitled "Good-by and Keep Cold": who but he could summon, with so

few strokes, the frightened colt "with one forefoot on the wall, the other curled at his breast" in "The Runaway." The very scheme of *New Hampshire* is an extended whimsicality: he offers the contents of the volume as a series of explanatory notes (and grace notes) to the title poem, which is supposed to be the book's *raison d'être.* The long poems (the "notes") rank with the narrative monologs in *North of Boston;* the "grace notes" contain not merely Frost's finest lines but some of the most haunting lyrics ever written by an American. Such a poem as "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" once in the mind of a reader will never leave it. Had Frost written nothing but these thirty "grace notes" his high place in poetry would be assured.

It has been said that Frost's work suffers from an exclusiveness, and even his most ardent admirers would be willing to admit that his is not an indiscriminately inclusive passion like Whitman's. But Frost loves what he loves with a fierce attachment, a fixed tenderness beyond a more easily transferred regard. His devotion to the intimacies of earth is, even more than Wordsworth's, rich, almost inordinate in its fidelity; what his emotion or his poetry may lack in windy range, is trebly compensated for by its untroubled depths.

Frost taught at Amherst College from 1916 to 1919 and, after an interval at Ann Arbor, from 1923 to 1925. In 1925 he returned to the University of Michigan which had offered him an "idle professorship" for life. He spends part of the year in educational circles, acting as "a sort of poetic radiator," a small part lecturing, and the rest of the time at his farm in Vermont.

THE PASTURE

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

THE TUFT OF FLOWERS

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the levelled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been,—alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim over night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly-weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart.
"Whether they work together or apart."

RELUCTANCE

Out through the fields and the woods
  And over the walls I have wended;
I have climbed the hills of view
  And looked at the world, and descended;
I have come by the highway home,
  And lo, it is ended.

The leaves are all dead on the ground,
  Save those that the oak is keeping
To ravel them one by one
  And let them go scraping and creeping
Out over the crusted snow,
  When others are sleeping.

And the dead leaves lie huddled and still,
  No longer blown hither and thither;
The last lone aster is gone;
  The flowers of the witch-hazel wither;
The heart is still aching to seek,
  But the feet question "Whither?"

Ah, when to the heart of man
  Was it ever less than a treason
To go with the drift of things
  To yield with a grace to reason,
And bow and accept the end
  Of a love or a season?

MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.

We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple-orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down!" I could say "elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there,
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness, as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,

She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage
To meet him in the doorway with the news
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
She pushed him outward with her through the door
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
She took the market things from Warren's arms
And set them on the porch, then drew him down
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.
"I told him so last haying, didn't I?
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
What good is he? Who else will harbour him
At his age for the little he can do?
What help he is there's no depending on.
Off he goes always when I need him most.
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'
'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.'
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself
If that was what it was. You can be certain,
When he begins like that, there's someone at him
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,—
In haying time, when any help is scarce.
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,

A miserable sight, and frightening, too—
You needn't smile—I didn't recognize him—
I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed.
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd been?"

"He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels,
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything?"

"But little."
"Anything? Mary, confess
He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me."

"Warren!"

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him say?
Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self-respect.
He added, if you really care to know,
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.
That sounds like something you have heard before?
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look
Two or three times—he made me feel so queer—
To see if he was talking in his sleep.
He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—
The boy you had in haying four years since.
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.
Silas declares you'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:

Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!
The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft
On education—you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on."

"Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot."

"Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You wouldn't think they would. How some things
linger!
Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.
After so many years he still keeps finding
Good arguments he sees he might have used.
I sympathise. I know just how it feels
To think of the right thing to say too late.
Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.
He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying
He studied Latin like the violin
Because he liked it—that an argument!
He said he couldn't make the boy believe
He could find water with a hazel prong—
Which showed how much good school had ever done
him.
He wanted to go over that. But most of all
He thinks if he could have another chance
To teach him how to build a load of hay—"

"I know, that's Silas' one accomplishment.
He bundles every forkful in its place,
And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading. Silas does that well.
He takes it out in bunches like birds' nests.
You never see him standing on the hay
He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself."

"He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be
Some good perhaps to someone in the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the west,
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,
As if she played unheard the tenderness
That wrought on him beside her in the night.
"Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home?
It all depends on what you mean by home.
Of course he's nothing to us, any more
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.
"Silas has better claim on us, you think,

Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles
As the road winds would bring him to his door.
Silas has walked that far no doubt to-day.
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,
A somebody—director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.
I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right
To take him in, and might be willing to—
He may be better than appearances.
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
If he'd had any pride in claiming kin
Or anything he looked for from his brother,
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.
Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him—
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.
He never did a thing so very bad.
He don't know why he isn't quite as good
As anyone. He won't be made ashamed
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"I can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.
You must go in and see what you can do.
I made the bed up for him there to-night.
You'll be surprised at him—how much he's broken.
His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.
But, Warren, please remember how it is:
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.
Then there were three there, making a dim row,
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.

Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren?" she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the line of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,

And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.

So was I once myself a swinger of birches;
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate wilfully misunderstand me

And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

THE RUNAWAY

Once when the snow of the year was beginning to fall,
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say, "Whose colt?"
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his head
And snorted to us. And then he had to bolt.
We heard the miniature thunder where he fled,
And we saw him, or thought we saw him, dim and grey,
Like a shadow against the curtain of falling flakes.
"I think the little fellow's afraid of the snow.
He isn't winter-broken. It isn't play
With the little fellow at all. He's running away.
I doubt if even his mother could tell him, 'Sakes,
It's only weather.' He'd think she didn't know!
Where is his mother? He can't be out alone."
And now he comes again with a clatter of stone
And mounts the wall again with whited eyes
And all his tail that isn't hair up straight.
He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.
"Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
Ought to be told to come and take him in."

GOOD-BYE AND KEEP COLD

This saying good-bye on the verge of the dark
And cold to an orchard so young in the bark,
Reminds me of all that can happen to harm
An orchard away at the end of the farm
All winter cut off by a hill from the house.
I don't want it girdled by rabbit and mouse,
I don't want it dreamily nibbled for browse
By deer, and I don't want it budded by grouse,
(If certain it wouldn't be idle to call,
I'd summon grouse, rabbit and deer to the wall
And warn them away with a stick for a gun.)
I don't want it stirred by the heat of the sun.
(We made it secure against being, I hope,
By setting it out on a northerly slope.)
No orchard's the worse for the wintriest storm,
But one thing about it, it mustn't get warm.
"How often already you've had to be told
Keep cold, young orchard. Good-bye and keep cold.
Dread fifty above more than fifty below."
I have to be gone for a season or so;
My business awhile is with different trees,
Less carefully nurtured, less fruitful than these
And such as is done to their wood with an ax—
Maples and birches and tamaracks.
I wish I could promise to lie in the night
And share in an orchard's arboreal plight,
When slowly (and nobody comes with a light!)
Its heart sinks lower under the sod;
But something has to be left to God.

TO EARTHWARD

Love at the lips was touch
As sweet as I could bear;
And once that seemed too much;
I lived on air

That crossed me from sweet things,
The flow of—was it musk
From hidden grapevine springs
Down hill at dusk?

I had the swirl and ache
From sprays of honeysuckle
That when they're gathered shake
Dew on the knuckle.

I craved strong sweets, but those
Seemed strong when I was young;
The petal of the rose
It was that stung.

Now no joy but lacks salt
That is not dashed with pain
And weariness and fault;
I crave the stain

Of tears, the aftermark
Of almost too much love,
The sweet of bitter bark
And burning clove.

When stiff and sore and scarred
I take away my hand
From leaning on it hard
In grass and sand,

The hurt is not enough:
I long for weight and strength
To feel the earth as rough
To all my length.

TWO LOOK AT TWO

Love and forgetting might have carried them
A little further up the mountain side
With night so near, but not much further up.
They must have halted soon in any case
With thoughts of the path back, how rough it was
With rock and washout, and unsafe in darkness;
When they were halted by a tumbled wall
With barbed-wire binding. They stood facing this,
Spending what onward impulse they still had
In one last look the way they must not go,
On up the failing path, where, if a stone
Or earthslide moved at night, it moved itself;
No footstep moved it. "This is all," they sighed,
"Good-night to woods." But not so; there was more.
A doe from round a spruce stood looking at them
Across the wall, as near the wall as they.
She saw them in their field, they her in hers.
The difficulty of seeing what stood still,
Like some up-ended boulder split in two,
Was in her clouded eyes: they saw no fear there.
She seemed to think that two thus they were safe.
Then, as if they were something that, though strange,
She could not trouble her mind with too long,
She sighed and passed unscared along the wall.
"*This,* then, is all. What more is there to ask?"
But no, not yet. A snort to bid them wait.
A buck from round the spruce stood looking at them
Across the wall as near the wall as they.
This was an antlered buck of lusty nostril.

Not the same doe come back into her place.
He viewed them quizzically with jerks of head,
As if to ask, "Why don't you make some motion?
Or give some sign of life? Because you can't.
I doubt if you're as living as you look."
Thus till he had them almost feeling dared
To stretch a proffering hand—and a spell-breaking.
Then he too passed unscared along the wall.
Two had seen two, which ever side you spoke from.
"This *must* be all." It was all. Still they stood,
A great wave from it going over them,
As if the earth in one unlooked-for favor
Had made them certain earth returned their love.

FIRE AND ICE

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

A SKY PAIR

CANIS MAJOR

The Great Overdog,
That heavenly beast
With a star in one eye,
Gives a leap in the East.

He dances upright
All the way to the West,
And never once drops
On his forefeet to rest.

I'm a poor Underdog;
But to-night I will bark,
With the Great Overdog
That romps through the dark.

THE PEACEFUL SHEPHERD

If heaven were to do again,
And on the pasture bars
I leaned to line the figures in
Between the dotted stars,

I should be tempted to forget,
I think, the Crown of Rule,
The Scales of Trade, the Cross of Faith,
As hardly worth renewal.

For these have governed in our lives,
And see how men have warred!
The Cross, the Crown, the Scales, may all
As well have been the Sword.

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

William Ellery Leonard

William Ellery Leonard was born at Plainfield, New Jersey, January 25, 1876. He received his A.M. at Harvard in 1899 and completed his studies at the Universities of Göttingen and Bonn. After traveling for several years throughout Europe, he became a teacher and has been professor of English in the University of Wisconsin since 1906.

The Vaunt of Man (1912) is Leonard's most characteristic volume. Traditional in form and material, it is anything but conservative in spirit. Leonard's insurrectionary fervor speaks resonantly in the simplest of his quatrains and the strictest of his sonnets. This protesting passion is given an even wider sweep in *The Lynching Bee and Other Poems* (1920), the title-poem being a terrific indictment in which the poet's outrage is heard with a new ironism.

Tutankhamen and After (1924) is an ambitious attempt to picture the continuity of man's life in three pages, but in spite of a few felicitous lines the title-poem is prosy. The shorter verses are more successful, more sonorous. The publisher does Mr. Leonard a grave injustice by claiming this as "his most representative volume." That distinction must be claimed by *The Vaunt*

of Man or, were it to be made public, *Two Lives,* which was privately printed in 1923 for distribution among Leonard's friends. Reminiscent of Richard Dehmel's *Zwei Menschen* this chain of sonnets compresses an intensity too great to remain an autobiographical privacy or, worse, a collector's "item."

Besides his original poetry, Leonard has published several volumes of translations from the Greek and Latin as well as a series of paraphrases of the fables of Æsop.

THE IMAGE OF DELIGHT

O how came I that loved stars, moon, and flame,
And unimaginable wind and sea,
All inner shrines and temples of the free,
Legends and hopes and golden books of fame;
I that upon the mountain carved my name
With cliffs and clouds and eagles over me,
O how came I to stoop to loving thee—
I that had never stooped before to shame?

O 'twas not thee! Too eager of a white
Far beauty and a voice to answer mine,
Myself I built an image of delight,
Which all one purple day I deemed divine—
And when it vanished in the fiery night,
I lost not thee, nor any shape of thine.

TO THE VICTOR

Man's mind is larger than his brow of tears;
This hour is not my all of time; this place
My all of earth; nor this obscene disgrace
My all of life; and thy complacent sneers
Shall not pronounce my doom to my compeers
While the Hereafter lights me in the face,
And from the Past, as from the mountain's base,
Rise, as I rise, the long tumultuous cheers.

And who slays me must overcome a world:
Heroes at arms, and virgins who became
Mothers of children, prophecy and song;
Walls of old cities with their flags unfurled;
Peaks, headlands, ocean and its isles of fame—
And sun and moon and all that made me strong!

Sarah N. Cleghorn

Sarah Norcliffe Cleghorn was born at Norfolk, Virginia, February 4, 1876. She came North early in her youth and was graduated from Burr and Burton Seminary in Manchester, Vermont (in 1895), in which town, after a year at Radcliffe, she has lived ever since.

An ardent worker for lost causes, Miss Cleghorn's fiery spirit shines through *Portraits and Protests* (1917), the first half of which is coolly descriptive and the second half, hotly insurrectionary verse. Among the portraits "Emilia" has a quaint and almost archaic wistfulness; of the rebellious verses the two reprinted here have a packed irony, the more forceful for being so restrained.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

"The unfit die: the fit both live and thrive."
Alas, who say so?—They who do survive.

So when her bonfires lighted hill and plain,
Did Bloody Mary think on Lady Jane.

So Russia thought of Finland, while her heel
Fell heavier on the prostrate commonweal.

So Booth of Lincoln thought; and so the High
Priests let Barabbas live, and Jesus die.

THE INCENTIVE

I saw a sickly cellar plant
Droop on its feeble stem, for want
Of sun and wind and rain and dew—
Of freedom!—Then a man came through
The cellar, and I heard him say,
"Poor, foolish plant, by all means stay
Contented here: for—know you not?—
This stagnant dampness, mould and rot
Are your incentive to grow tall
And reach that sunbeam on the wall."
—Even as he spoke, the sun's one spark
Withdrew, and left the dusk more dark.

Alex Rogers

Alex Rogers was born in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1876, and was educated in the public schools of that city. After attempting various occupations, he became a writer of words for popular songs. Many of the "hits" of the Williams and Walker musical comedies were written by him; the very name of Bert Williams was synonymous with "The Jonah Man" and "Nobody," which were created for him by Rogers. Two of his most characteristic lyrics appear in *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922), an anthology edited by James Weldon Johnson with an introductory essay on the Negro's creative genius.

"The Rain Song," to which Will Marion Cook, another gifted Negro, furnished infectious music, was originally a concerted number in one of the Williams and Walker burlesques. It is interesting to compare Rogers' version with the far older "Signs of Rain" by Edward Jenner. It is not only amusing but enlightening from an ethnographic standpoint to see how Rogers has localized and colloquialized many of Jenner's polished lines. The result is as racy as it is successful.

RAIN SONG

Bro. Simmons

"Walk right in, Brudder Wilson—how you feelin' today?"

Bro. Wilson

"Jes' tol'able, Brudder Simmons, but den I ginnerly feels dat way."

Bro. Simmons

"Here's White an' Black an' Brown an' Green; how's all you gent'mens been?"

Bro. White

"My health is good but my bus'ness slack."

Bro. Black

"I'se been suff'rin' lots wid pains in my back."

Bro. Brown

"My ole 'ooman's sick, but *I'se* alright—"

Bro. Green

"Yes, I went aftuh Doctuh fuh her 'tuther night—"

Bro. Simmons

"Here's Sandy Turner, as I live!"

Bro. Turner

"Yes, I didn't 'spect to git here—but here I is!"

Bro. Simmons

"Now, gent'mens, make you'selves to home,
Dare's nothin' to fear—my ole 'ooman's gone—
My stars, da weather's pow'ful warm—
I wouldn't be s'prised ef we had a storm."

Bro. Brown

"No, Brudder Simmons, we kin safely say
'Tain't gwine to be no storm today,
Kase here am facts dat's mighty plain
An' any time you sees 'em you kin look fuh rain:

Any time you hears da cheers and tables crack
An' da folks wid rheumatics—dare jints is on da rack—"

All

"Lookout fuh rain, rain, rain."

Bro. Brown and Chorus

"When da ducks quack loud an' da peacocks cry,
An' da far off hills seems to be right nigh,
Prepare fuh rain, rain, rain!

"When da ole cat on da hearth wid her velvet paws
'Gins to wipin' over her whiskered jaws,
Sho' sign o' rain, rain, rain!

"When da frog's done changed his yaller vest,
An' in his brown suit he is dressed,
Mo' rain, an' still mo' rain!

"When you notice da air it stan's stock still,
An' da blackbird's voice it gits so awful shrill,
Dat am da time fuh rain.

"When yo' dog quits bones an' begins to fas',
An' when you see him eatin', he's eatin' grass:
Shoes', trues', cert'nes' sign ob rain!"

Refrain

"No, Brudder Simmons, we kin safely say,
'Tain't gwine tuh be no rain today.
Kase da sut [1] ain't fallin' an da dogs ain't sleep,
An' you ain't seen no spiders fum dare cobwebs creep;
Last night da sun went bright to bed,
An' da moon ain't nevah once been seen to hang her head;
If youse watched all dis, den you kin safely say,
Dat dar ain't a-gwine to be no rain today.
No rain today!"

Carl Sandburg

Carl (August) Sandburg was born of Swedish stock at Galesburg, Illinois, January 6, 1878. His schooling was haphazard; at thirteen he went to work on a milk wagon. During the next six years he was, in rapid succession, porter in a barber shop, scene-shifter in a cheap theatre, truck-handler in a brickyard, turner apprentice in a pottery, dish-washer in Denver and Omaha hotels, harvest hand in Kansas wheatfields. These tasks equipped him, as no amount of learning could have done, to be the laureate of industrial America. When war with Spain was declared in 1898, Sandburg, avid for fresh adventure, enlisted in Company C., Sixth Illinois Volunteers.

On his return from the campaign in Porto Rico, Sandburg entered Lombard College in Galesburg and, for the first time, began to think in terms of literature. After leaving college, where he had been captain of the basket-ball team as well as editor-in-chief of the college paper, Sandburg did all manner of things to earn a living. He was advertising manager for a department store and worked as district organizer for the Social-Democratic party of Wisconsin. He became a salesman, a

[1] Sut = soot.

pamphleteer, a newspaperman. On the staff of a business magazine, he became a "safety first" expert, his articles on accident prevention bringing him before manufacturers' conventions, where he talked about machinery safeguards and methods found successful in reducing injuries in factory organizations.

In 1904 Sandburg published the proverbial "slender sheaf," a tiny pamphlet of twenty-two poems, uneven in quality, but strangely like the work of the mature Sandburg in feeling. What is more, these experiments anticipated the very inflection of the later poems, with their spiritual kinship to Henley and Whitman; several of these early experiments (with the exception of the rhymed verses) might be placed, without seeming incongruous, in the most recent collection of Sandburg's pieces. The idiom of *Smoke and Steel* (1920) is more intensified, but it is the same idiom as that of "Milville" (1903), which begins:

Down in southern New Jersey they make glass.
By day and by night, the fires burn on in Milville and bid the sand let in the light.

Meanwhile the newspaperman was having a hard struggle to keep the poet alive. Until he was thirty-six years old Sandburg was totally unknown to the literary world. In 1914 a group of his poems appeared in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse;* during the same year one of the group (the now famous "Chicago") was awarded the Levinson prize of two hundred dollars. A little more than a year later his first, full-fledged book was published, and Sandburg—tardily but triumphantly—had arrived.

Chicago Poems (1916) is full of ferment; it seethes with a direct poetry surcharged with tremendous energy. If Frost is an intellectual aristocrat, Sandburg might be termed an emotional democrat. Here is an almost animal exultation that is also an exaltation. Sandburg's speech is simple and powerful; he uses slang as freely (and beautifully) as his predecessors used the now archaic tongue of their times. Never has the American vulgate been used with such artistry and effect. (See Preface.) Immediately the cries of protest were heard: Sandburg was coarse and brutal; his work ugly and distorted; his language unrefined, unfit for poetry. His detractors forgot that Sandburg was only brutal when dealing with brutality; that beneath his toughness, he was one of the tenderest of living poets; that, when he used

colloquialisms and a richly metaphorical slang, he was searching for new poetic values in "limber, lasting, fierce words"—unconsciously answering Whitman who asked, "Do you suppose the liberties and brawn of These States have to do only with delicate lady-words? With gloved gentleman-words?"

Cornhuskers (1918) is another step forward; it is fully as sweeping as its forerunner and far more sensitive. The gain in power and restraint is evident in the very first poem, a magnificent panoramic vision of the prairie. Here is something of the surge of a Norse saga; *Cornhuskers* is keen with a salty vigor, a vast sympathy for all that is splendid and terrible in Nature. But the raw violence is restrained to the point of a half-withheld mysticism. There are, in this volume, dozens of those delicate perceptions of beauty that must astonish those who think that Sandburg can write only a big-fisted, rough-neck sort of poetry. As Sandburg has sounded some of the most *fortissimo* notes in modern poetry, he has also breathed some of its softest phrases. "Cool Tombs," one of the most poignant lyrics of our time, moves with a new music; "Grass" whispers as quietly as the earlier "Fog" stole in on stealthy, cat feet.

Smoke and Steel (1920) is the synthesis of its predecessors. In this ripest of his collections, Sandburg has fused mood, accent and image in a new intensity. Whether the poet evokes the spirit of a jazz-band or, having had the radiance (the "flash crimson"), prays to touch life at its other extreme, this volume is not so vociferous as it is assured. It is a worthy setting for the flaming title poem; it is, in spite of certain overmystical accents, an epic of industrialism. Smoke-belching chimneys are here, quarries and great boulders of iron-ribbed rock; here are titanic visions: the dreams of men and machinery. And silence is here—the silence of sleeping tenements and sun-soaked cornfields. *Smoke and Steel* is a rich amalgam; indigenous to the core. And what makes it so vital is Sandburg's own spirit: a never-sated joy in existence, a continually fresh delight in the variety and wonder of life.

Slabs of the Sunburnt West (1923) is a fresh fusing: here we have in quick succession the sardonic invectives of "And So Today," the rhapsody of "The Windy City" (an amplification of the early "Chicago"), and the panoramic title-poem. Although the book's chief exhibit is the amplitude of its longer poems, there are a few brevities (such as "Upstream") which have the vigor

of a jubilant cry. Sandburg is still tempted to talk at the top of his voice, to bang the table and hurl his loudest epithets into the teeth of his opponents, but often indeed he goes to the other extreme; he is likely to leave his material soft and loose instead of solidifying his emotions. There are even times when the poet seems unsure whether or not he can furnish more than a clue to the half-realized wisps of his imagination. But though his meaning may not always be clear, there is no mistaking the power of his feeling or the curious cadences of his music.

Besides his poetry, Sandburg has written two volumes of highly imaginative and, if one can conceive of such a thing, humorously mystical short tales for children: *Rootabaga Stories* (1922) and *Rootabaga Pigeons* (1923). However, most of his time during the last five years has been spent in travelling and studying documents for his remarkable *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years,* which is to be published on Lincoln's birthday, 1926.

During the last few years the poet has perfected a unique lecture—part recital, part singing of American folk-tunes, part "circus," as he describes it—which has been given throughout the country. Accompanied by his guitar, Sandburg brings new values to the reading of poetry. And his low-toned footnotes are full of philosophic asides; even his definitions have a flavor peculiarly their own. Speaking of realism and romanticism, he once told the following fable: "There was a man who did not find in his house all he desired. One day he came in to find his wife working with a workbasket full of bright silk threads. He caught up a handful. He held them tight for a moment. Then he opened his hand. The threads became hundreds of brilliant butterflies flying joyfully about the room. The man watched them. Then he opened his hand, gathered them all in, tightened his hold. They became silk threads; he returned them to the workbasket. . . . And if you can believe that," Sandburg concluded with the silver ghost of a smile, "you are a romanticist."

Sandburg has been on the staff of the *Chicago Daily News* since 1919, and lives in Elmhurst, Illinois, within commuting distance of Chicago and within earshot of frogs, silver peepers and "evening waterfalls of songs."

CHICAGO

Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.

And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding.

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,

Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,
Laughing!
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

COOL TOMBS

When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder? does she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

NOCTURNE IN A DESERTED BRICKYARD

Stuff of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line,
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night.

GRASS

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work—
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

FOUR PRELUDES ON PLAYTHINGS OF THE WIND

"The Past is a Bucket of Ashes."

1

The woman named To-morrow
sits with a hairpin in her teeth
and takes her time
and does her hair the way she wants it
and fastens at last the last braid and coil
and puts the hairpin where it belongs
and turns and drawls: Well, what of it?
My grandmother, Yesterday, is gone.
What of it? Let the dead be dead.

2

The doors were cedar
and the panels strips of gold
and the girls were golden girls
and the panels read and the girls chanted:
    We are the greatest city,
    and the greatest nation:
    nothing like us ever was.
The doors are twisted on broken hinges.
Sheets of rain swish through on the wind
    where the golden girls ran and the panels
        read:
    We are the greatest city,
    the greatest nation,
    nothing like us ever was.

3

It has happened before.
Strong men put up a city and got
a nation together,
And paid singers to sing and women
to warble: We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation,
nothing like us ever was.

And while the singers sang
and the strong men listened
and paid the singers well,
there were rats and lizards who listened
. . . and the only listeners left now
. . . . are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards.
And there are black crows
crying, "Caw, caw,"
bringing mud and sticks
building a nest
over the words carved
on the doors where the panels were cedar
and the strips on the panels were gold
and the golden girls came singing:
We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation:
nothing like us ever was.

The only singers now are crows crying, "Caw, caw,"
And the sheets of rain whine in the wind and doorways.
And the only listeners now are . . . the rats . . . and the
lizards.

4

The feet of the rats
scribble on the door sills;

the hieroglyphs of the rat footprints
chatter the pedigrees of the rats
and babble of the blood
and gabble of the breed
of the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers
of the rats.

And the wind shifts
and the dust on a doorsill shifts
and even the writing of the rat footprints
tells us nothing, nothing at all
about the greatest city, the greatest nation
where the strong men listened
and the women warbled: Nothing like us ever was.

A. E. F.

There will be a rusty gun on the wall, sweetheart,
The rifle grooves curling with flakes of rust.
A spider will make a silver string nest in the darkest, warmest corner of it.
The trigger and the range-finder, they too will be rusty.
And no hands will polish the gun, and it will hang on the wall.
Forefingers and thumbs will point absently and casually toward it.
It will be spoken among half-forgotten, wished-to-be-forgotten things.
They will tell the spider: Go on, you're doing good work.

OMAHA

Red barns and red heifers spot the green grass circles around Omaha—the farmers haul tanks of cream and wagon loads of cheese.

Shale hogbacks across the river at Council Bluffs and shanties hang by an eyelash to the hill slants back around Omaha.

A span of steel ties up the kin of Iowa and Nebraska across the yellow, big-hoofed Missouri River.

Omaha, the roughneck, feeds armies,
Eats and swears from a dirty face.
Omaha works to get the world a breakfast.

JAZZ FANTASIA

Drum on your drums, batter on your banjos, sob on the long cool winding saxophones. Go to it, O jazzmen.

Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the happy tin pans, let your trombones ooze, and go husha-husha-hush with the slippery sandpaper.

Moan like an autumn wind high in the lonesome treetops, moan soft like you wanted somebody terrible, cry like a racing car slipping away from a motorcycle-cop, bang-bang! you jazzmen, bang altogether drums, traps, banjos, horns, tin cans—make two people fight on the top of a stairway and scratch each other's eyes in a clinch tumbling down the stairs.

Can the rough stuff . . . Now a Mississippi steamboat pushes up the night river with a hoo-hoo-hoo-oo . . . and the green lanterns calling to the high soft stars . . . a red moon rides on the humps of the low river hills. . . . Go to it, O jazzmen.

FROM "SMOKE AND STEEL"

Smoke of the fields in spring is one,
Smoke of the leaves in autumn another.

Smoke of a steel-mill roof or a battleship funnel,
They all go up in a line with a smokestack,
Or they twist . . . in the slow twist . . . of the wind.

If the north wind comes they run to the south.
If the west wind comes they run to the east.
By this sign
all smokes
know each other.
Smoke of the fields in spring and leaves in autumn,
Smoke of the finished steel, chilled and blue,
By the oath of work they swear: "I know you."

Hunted and hissed from the center
Deep down long ago when God made us over,
Deep down are the cinders we came from—
You and I and our heads of smoke.

. . . . .

Some of the smokes God dropped on the job
Cross on the sky and count our years
And sing in the secrets of our numbers;
Sing their dawns and sing their evenings,
Sing an old log-fire song:
You may put the damper up,
You may put the damper down,
The smoke goes up the chimney just the same.

Smoke of a city sunset skyline,
Smoke of a country dusk horizon—
They cross on the sky and count our years.

. . . . . .

Smoke of a brick-red dust
Winds on a spiral
Out of the stacks
For a hidden and glimpsing moon.
This, said the bar-iron shed to the blooming mill,
This is the slang of coal and steel.

The day-gang hands it to the night-gang,
The night-gang hands it back.

Stammer at the slang of this—
Let us understand half of it.
In the rolling mills and sheet mills,
In the harr and boom of the blast fires,
The smoke changes its shadow
And men change their shadow;
A nigger, a wop, a bohunk changes.

A bar of steel—it is only
Smoke at the heart of it, smoke and the blood of a man.
A runner of fire ran in it, ran out, ran somewhere else,
And left smoke and the blood of a man
And the finished steel, chilled and blue.

So fire runs in, runs out, runs somewhere else again,
And the bar of steel is a gun, a wheel, a nail, a shovel,
A rudder under the sea, a steering-gear in the sky;
And always dark in the heart and through it,
Smoke and the blood of a man.
Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Gary, they make their steel with men.

In the blood of men and the ink of chimneys
The smoke nights write their oaths:
Smoke into steel and blood into steel;
Homestead, Braddock, Birmingham, they make their steel with men.
Smoke and blood is the mix of steel.

The birdmen drone
in the blue; it is steel
a motor sings and zooms.

. . . . . .

Steel barb-wire around The Works.

Steel guns in the holsters of the guards at the gates of
The Works.
Steel ore-boats bring the loads clawed from the earth by
steel, lifted and lugged by arms of steel, sung on its
way by the clanking clam-shells.
The runners now, the handlers now, are steel; they dig and
clutch and haul; they hoist their automatic knuckles
from job to job; they are steel making steel.
Fire and dust and air fight in the furnaces; the pour is
timed, the billets wriggle; the clinkers are dumped:
Liners on the sea, skyscrapers on the land; diving steel in
the sea, climbing steel in the sky.

LOSERS

If I should pass the tomb of Jonah
I would stop there and sit for a while;
Because I was swallowed one time deep in the dark
And came out alive after all.

If I pass the burial spot of Nero
I shall say to the wind, "Well, well!"—
I who have fiddled in a world on fire,
I who have done so many stunts not worth the doing.

I am looking for the grave of Sinbad too.
I want to shake his ghost-hand and say,
"Neither of us died very early, did we?"

And the last sleeping-place of Nebuchadnezzar—
When I arrive there I shall tell the wind:
"You ate grass; I have eaten crow—
Who is better off now or next year?"

Jack Cade, John Brown, Jesse James,
There too I could sit down and stop for a while.
I think I could tell their headstones:
"God, let me remember all good losers."

I could ask people to throw ashes on their heads
In the name of that sergeant at Belleau Woods,
Walking into the drumfires, calling his men,
"Come on, you . . . Do you want to live forever?"

FLASH CRIMSON

I shall cry God to give me a broken foot.

I shall ask for a scar and a slashed nose.

I shall take the last and the worst.

I shall be eaten by gray creepers in a bunkhouse where no runners of the sun come and no dogs live.

And yet—of all "and yets" this is the bronze strongest—

I shall keep one thing better than all else; there is the blue steel of a great star of early evening in it; it lives longer than a broken foot or any scar.

The broken foot goes to a hole dug with a shovel or the bone of a nose may whiten on a hilltop—and yet—"and yet"—

There is one crimson pinch of ashes left after all; and none of the shifting winds that whip the grass and none of the pounding rains that beat the dust know how to touch or find the flash of this crimson.

I cry to God to give me a broken foot, a scar, or a lousy death.

I who have seen the flash of this crimson, I ask God for the last and worst.

UPSTREAM

The strong men keep coming on,
They go down shot, hanged, sick, broken.
They live on fighting, singing, lucky as plungers.
The strong mothers pulling them on . . .
The strong mothers pulling them from a dark sea, a great prairie, a long mountain.
Call hallelujah, call amen, call deep thanks.
The strong men keep coming on.

Adelaide Crapsey

Adelaide Crapsey, daughter of the famous minister, Algernon S. Crapsey, was born, September 9, 1878, in Rochester, New York, where she spent her childhood. She entered Vassar College in 1897, graduating with the class of 1901. Two years after graduation she began work as a teacher of History and Literature, in Kemper Hall, Kenosha, Wisconsin, where she had attended preparatory school. In 1905 she went abroad, studying archæology in Rome. After her return she essayed to teach again, but her failing health compelled her to discontinue and though she became instructor in Poetics at Smith College in 1911, the burden was too great for her.

Prior to this time she had written little verse, her chief work being an analysis of English metrics, an investigation (which she never finished) of certain problems in verse structure. In 1913, after her breakdown, she began to write those brief lines which are so precise and poignant, most of her tiny volume being composed during the last few months of her life. She was particularly happy in her "Cinquains," a form that she originated. These five-line stanzas in the strictest possible structure (the lines having, respectively, two, four, six, eight and two syllables) doubtless owe something to the Japanese *hokku,* but Adelaide Crapsey saturated them with her own fragile loveliness.

"Her death," writes Claude Bragdon, who was not only her friend but her first publisher, "was tragic. Full of the desire of

life she was forced to go, leaving her work all unfinished. Her last year was spent in exile at Saranac. From her window she looked down on the graveyard—'Trudeau's Garden,' she called it, with grim-gay irony. Here, forbidden the work her metrical study entailed, these poems grew—flowers of a battlefield of the spirit." She died at Saranac Lake, New York, on October 8, 1914. Her small volume *Verse* appeared in 1915, and a part of the unfinished *Study in English Metrics* was posthumously published in 1918. A second edition of *Verse* with a few additional poems appeared in 1922.

FOUR CINQUAINS

NOVEMBER NIGHT

Listen . . .
With faint dry sound,
Like steps of passing ghosts,
The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees
And fall.

SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS [1]

"Why do
You thus devise
Evil against her?" "For that
She is beautiful, delicate.
Therefore."

TRIAD

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead.

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 328.

THE WARNING

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold?

ON SEEING WEATHER-BEATEN TREES

Is it as plainly in our living shown,
By slant and twist, which way the wind hath blown?

ADVENTURE

Sun and wind and beat of sea,
Great lands stretching endlessly . . .
Where be bonds to bind the free?
All the world was made for me!

SONG

I make my shroud, but no one knows—
So shimmering fine it is and fair,
With stitches set in even rows.
I make my shroud, but no one knows.

In door-way where the lilac blows,
Humming a little wandering air,
I make my shroud and no one knows,
So shimmering fine it is and fair.

Grace Hazard Conkling was born in 1878 in New York City. After graduating from Smith College in 1899, she studied music at the University of Heidelberg (1902-3) and Paris (1903-4). Since 1914 she has been a teacher of English at Smith College, where she has done much to create an alert interest in poetry.

Mrs. Conkling's *Afternoons of April* (1915) and *Wilderness Songs* (1920) contain a graciousness that rarely grows cloying. Gentle colors and a gentler sadness are here; soft music, the whisper of flutes above a plaintive English horn, rises from her pages. But the poems are by no means monotonous. A fragrant whimsicality, a childlike freshness vivifies poems like "The Whole Duty of Berkshire Brooks," "Dilemma" and "Frost on a Window," which reminds one of the manner of her amazing daughter, Hilda, (see page 591).

Ship's Log (1924) is a more uneven collection. Its very ambition is a handicap, for Mrs. Conkling cannot splash color about as boldly as the poems promise. But even the echoes of Amy Lowell and Robert Frost do not drown the poet's own clarinet-like, though sometimes uncertain, tone.

THE WHOLE DUTY OF BERKSHIRE BROOKS

To build the trout a crystal stair;
To comb the hillside's thick green hair;
To water jewel-weed and rushes;
To teach first notes to baby thrushes;
To flavor raspberry and apple
And make a whirling pool to dapple
With scattered gold of late October;
To urge wise laughter on the sober
And lend a dream to those who laugh;
To chant the beetle's epitaph;
To mirror the blue dragonfly,
Frail air-plane of a slender sky;
Over the stones to lull and leap
Herding the bubbles like white sheep;
The claims of worry to deny,
And whisper sorrow into sleep!

FROST ON A WINDOW

This forest looks the way
Nightingales sound.
Tall larches lilt and sway
Above the glittering ground:
The wild white cherry spray
Scatters radiance round.

The chuckle of the nightingale
Is like this elfin wood.
Even as his gleaming trills assail
The spirit's solitude,
These leaves of light, these branches frail
Are music's very mood.

The song of these fantastic trees,
The plumes of frost they wear,
Are for the poet's whim who sees
Through a deceptive air,
And has an ear for melodies
When never a sound is there.

Amelia Josephine Burr

Amelia Josephine Burr was born in New York City in 1878. She was educated at Hunter College and has made her home in Englewood, New Jersey.

A great range of interest has been the outstanding feature of her work. Too often she yields to her own facility; page after page suffers from its author's uncritical fluency. But, cheek by jowl with pretty platitudes, one discovers splendid stanzas, blank verse monologs and rhymed narratives that are memorable. For all the trumpery versifying, there is decided vigor in many pages of *The Roadside Fire* (1912), *In Deep Places* (1914) and *Life and Living* (1916).

BATTLE-SONG OF FAILURE

We strain toward Heaven and lay hold on Hell;
  With starward eyes we stumble in hard ways,
And to the moments when we see life well
  Succeeds the blindness of bewildered days,—
But what of that? Into the sullen flesh
  Our souls drive home the spur with splendid sting.
Bleeding and soiled, we gird ourselves afresh.
  Forth, and make firm a highway for the King.

The loveless greed the centuries have stored
  In marshy foulness traps our faltering feet.
The sins of men whom punishment ignored
  Like fever in our weakened pulses beat;
But what of that? The shame is not to fail
  Nor is the victor's laurel everything.
To fight until we fall is to prevail.
  Forth, and make firm a highway for the King.

Yea, cast our lives into the ancient slough,
  And fall we shouting, with uplifted face;
Over the spot where mired we struggle now
  Shall march in triumph a transfigured race.
They shall exult where weary we have wept—
  They shall achieve where we have striven in vain—
Leaping in vigor where we faintly crept,
  Joyous along the road we paved with pain.
What though we seem to sink in the morass?
  Under those unborn feet our dust shall sing,
When o'er our failure perfect they shall pass.
  Forth, and make firm a highway for the King!

James Branch Cabell was born in Richmond, Virginia, April 14, 1879. He taught French and Greek for two years at William and Mary College (1896-7), worked in the pressroom of the Richmond *Times* (1898), was on the staff of the New York *Herald* (1899-1901), and began contributing to the magazines in 1902, writing over sixty short stories as well as scattered essays, translations and papers on historical and biographical subjects.

Although Cabell likes to describe himself as a genealogist, he is the author of some of the most exquisite prose in contemporary literature, a prose that rises high above its own beauty of style. In books like *The Certain Hour* (1916), *The Cream of the Jest* (1917), *Jurgen* (1919) and the poetry-crammed "comedy of appearances," *Figures of Earth* (1921), the composite Cabell hero emerges, triumphant in the midst of his defeats—the eternally disillusioned, eternally hopeful Jurgen-Charteris-Kennaston: a symbol of the human soul seeking some sort of finality, some assurance in a world of illimitable perplexities.

Though Cabell is best known as a novelist, his books are liberally dotted with original verses that do duty as chapter-headings, mottoes, tail-pieces, interpolated songs and epilogues. A complete volume of his verse, *From the Hidden Way* (1916), bore the subtitle "Being Seventy-Five Adaptations." It purported to be paraphrases from forgotten troubadours like Allesandro de Medici, Antoine Riczi, Charles Garnier and half a dozen other obscure Parnassians. Cabell even quoted the first lines of each of their poems in the original Latin, French or Provençal. Even after the hoax was exposed, it was difficult for most readers to believe that the entire collection—names, references, first lines in the "original" and all—was the creation of Cabell, the masquerader.

In *From the Hidden Way,* the romancer has added another story to that gem-studded ivory tower in which Cabell lives and escapes the modern world. Whether he echoes the mediæval ballata or the more modern rondeau, roundel and sonnet, his is an artifice firmly erected upon art.

SEA-SCAPES

I lie and dream in the soft warm sand; and the thunder
and surge and the baffled roar
Of the sea's relentless and vain endeavors are a pleasant
lullaby, here on shore.

Since a little hillock screens yonder ageless, tenacious bat-
tlings (which shatter, and pass
In foam and spume), I appraise, half-nodding, much sand
and sky and gaunt nodding grass.

And I am content to lie and dream; and I am too drowsy
to rise and see
If it be worth breasting—that ocean yonder, which a little
hillock hides from me.

ONE END OF LOVE

"It is long since we met," she said.
I answered, "Yes."

She is not fair,
But very old now, and no gold
Gleams in that scant gray withered hair
Where once much gold was: and, I think,
Not easily might one bring tears
Into her eyes, which have become
Like dusty glass.

" 'Tis thirty years,"
I said. "And then the war came on
Apace, and our young King had need
Of men to serve him oversea
Against the heathen. For their greed,

Puffed up at Tunis, troubles him——"
She said: "This week my son is gone
To him at Paris with his men."
And then: "You never married, John?"

I answered, "No." And so we sate
Musing a while.

Then with his guests
Came Robert; and his thin voice broke
Upon my dream, with the old jests,
No food for laughter now: and swore
We must be friends now that our feud
Was overpast.

"We are grown old—
Eh, John?" he said. "And, by the Rood!
'Tis time we were at peace with God
Who are not long for this world."

"Yea,"
I answered; "we are old." And then,
Remembering that April day
At Calais, and that hawthorn field
Wherein we fought long since, I said:
"We are friends now."

And she sate by,
Scarce heeding. Thus the evening sped.

And we ride homeward now, and I
Ride moodily; my palfrey jogs
Along a rock-strewn way the moon
Lights up for us; yonder the bogs
Are curdled with thin ice; the trees
Are naked; from the barren wold
The wind comes like a blade aslant
Across a world grown very old.

FLOTSAM

We did not share the same inheritance,—
I and this woman, five years older than I,
Yet daughter of a later century,—
Who is therefore only wearied by that dance
Which has set my blood a-leaping.

It is queer
To note how kind her face grows, listening
To my wild talk, and plainly pitying
My callow youth, and seeing in me a dear
Amusing boy,—yet somehow old to be
Still reading *Alice through the Looking-Glass*
And *Water Babies* . . .

With light talk we pass

And I that have lived long in Arcady—
I that have kept so many a foolish tryst,
And written drivelling rhymes—feel stirring in me
Droll pity for this woman who pities me,
And whose weak mouth so many men have kissed.

Vachel Lindsay

(Nicholas) Vachel Lindsay was born in the house where he still lives in Springfield, Illinois, November 10, 1879. His home for many years was next door to the executive mansion of the State of Illinois; from the window where Lindsay did most of his writing, he saw many governors come and go, including the martyred John P. Altgeld, whom he has celebrated in one of his finest poems. He graduated from the Springfield High School, attended Hiram College (1897-1900), studied at the Art Institute at Chicago (1900-3) and at the New York School of Art (1904). After two years of lecturing and settlement work, he took the

first of his long tramps, walking through Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, preaching "the gospel of beauty," and formulating his unique plans for a communal art. (See Preface.) During the following five years, Lindsay made several of these trips, travelling as a combination missionary and minstrel. Like a true revivalist, he attempted to wake in the people he met a response to beauty; like Tommy Tucker, he sang, recited and chanted for his supper, distributing a little pamphlet entitled "Rhymes to be Traded for Bread."

Lindsay began to create more poetry to reach the public—all of his verse being written in his rôle of apostle. He was, primarily, a rhyming John the Baptist singing to convert the heathen, to stimulate and encourage the half-hearted dreams that hide and are lost in our sordid villages and townships. But the great audiences he was endeavoring to reach did not hear him, even though his collection *General Booth Enters Into Heaven* (1913) struck many a loud and racy note.

Lindsay broadened his effects, developed the chant, and, the following year, published his *The Congo and Other Poems* (1914), an infectious blend of rhyme, religion and rag-time. In the title poem and, in a lesser degree, the three companion chants, Lindsay struck his most powerful—and most popular—vein. It gave people (particularly when intoned aloud) that primitive joy in syncopated sound that is at the very base of song. In these experiments in breaking down the barriers between poetry and music, Lindsay (obviously infected by the echolalia of Poe's "Bells") tried to create what he called a "Higher Vaudeville" imagination, carrying the form back to the old Greek precedent where every line was half-spoken, half-sung.

Lindsay's innovation succeeded at once. The novelty, the speed, the clatter, forced the attention of people who had never paid the slightest heed to the poet's quieter verses. Men heard the *sounds* of hurtling America in these lines even when they were deaf to its spirit. They failed to see that, beneath the noise of "The Kallyope Yell" and "The Sante Fé Trail," Lindsay was partly an admirer, partly an ironical critic of the shrieking energy of these states. By his effort to win the enemy over, Lindsay had persuaded the proverbially tired business man to listen at last. But, in overstressing the vaudeville features, there arose the danger of Lindsay the poet being lost in Lindsay the entertainer. The

sympathetic and colorful studies of negro spirits and psychology (seen at their best in "The Congo," "John Brown" and "Simon Legree") degenerated into the crude buffooneries of "The Daniel Jazz" and "The Blacksmith's Serenade."

But Lindsay's earnestness, keyed up by an exuberant fancy, saved him. *The Chinese Nightingale* (1917) begins with one of the most whimsical pieces Lindsay has ever devised. And if the subsequent *The Golden Whales of California* (1920) is less distinctive, it is principally because the author has written too much and too speedily to be self-critical. It is his peculiar appraisal of loveliness, the rollicking high spirits joined to a stubborn evangelism, that makes Lindsay so representative a product of his environment.

Collected Poems (1923) is a complete and almost cruel exhibit of Lindsay's best and worst. That Lindsay has lost whatever faculty of self-criticism he may ever have possessed is evidenced by page after page of flat crudities; entire poems proceed with nothing more creative than mere physical energy whipping up a trivial idea. What mars so much of this writing is Lindsay's attempt to give every wisp of fantasy a cosmic or at least a national significance. Thus that intoxicating chant "The Ghosts of the Buffaloes" appears in the later edition with an unfortunate appendage, an irrelevant hortatory appeal beginning, "Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all!" But, in spite of the fact that the poet suffers from a complex of undiscriminating patriotism, a curious hero-worship which makes him link Woodrow Wilson with Socrates, his very catholicity is representative of a great part of his country. Much of Lindsay will die; he will not live as either a prophet or a politician. But the vitality which impels the best of his galloping meters will persist; his innocent wildness of imagination, outlasting his naïve programs, will charm even those to whom his brassy declamations are no longer a novelty.

Besides his original poetry, Lindsay has embodied his experiences and meditations on the road in two prose volumes, *A Handy Guide for Beggars* (1916) and *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty* (1914), as well as an enthusiastic study of the "silent drama," *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915). A curious document, half rhapsody, half visionary novel, entitled *The Golden Book of Springfield,* appeared in 1920.

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN [1]

[*John P. Altgeld. Born December 30, 1847; died March 12, 1902*]

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
"We have buried him now," thought your foes, and in secret rejoiced.
They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced,
They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you, day after day,
Now you were ended. They praised you, . . . and laid you away.

The others that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her pittance, the boy without youth,
The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame and the poor
That should have remembered forever, . . . remember no more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they call
The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen, the sons of your sons,
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming began,
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly, . . . eagle forgotten, . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.

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Sleep on, O brave hearted, O wise man, that kindled the flame—
To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name,
To live in mankind, far, far more . . . than to live in a name.

THE CONGO[1]

(*A Study of the Negro Race*)

I. Their Basic Savagery

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table, *A deep rolling bass.*
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, BOOM,
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, *More deliberate. Solemnly chanted.*
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

Then along that riverbank
A thousand miles
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song

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And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong. *A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket.*
And "BLOOD" screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors,
"BLOOD" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors,
"Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
Harry the uplands,
Steal all the cattle,
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
Bing!
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,"
A roaring, epic, rag-time tune *With a philosophic pause.*
From the mouth of the Congo
To the Mountains of the Moon.
Death is an Elephant,
Torch-eyed and horrible, *Shrilly and with a heavily accented meter.*
Foam-flanked and terrible.
BOOM, steal the pygmies,
BOOM, kill the Arabs,
BOOM, kill the white men,
Hoo, Hoo, Hoo. *Like the wind in the chimney.*
Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell.
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:—
"Be careful what you do,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo, *All the o sounds very golden. Heavy accents very heavy. Light accents very light. Last line whispered.*
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

II. Their Irrepressible High Spirits

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call *Rather shrill and high.*
Danced the juba in their gambling-hall
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom. . . *Read exactly as in first section.*
Then I saw the Congo, creeping through the black,
Cutting through the jungle with a golden track.
A negro fairyland swung into view, *Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible.*
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky,
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic-land.

A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came *With pomposity.*
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
And danced the juba from wall to wall.
But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng *With a great deliberation and ghostliness.*
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:—

"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you." . . .
Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes, *With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp.*
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
Shoes with a patent leather shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
And they pranced with their butterfly partners there, *With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm.*
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jessamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet.
And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
(O rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile).

The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,"
While the witch-men laughed, with a sinister air,
And sang with the scalawags prancing there:— *With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end.*
"Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
BOOM."
O rare was the revel, and well worth while *Slow philosophic calm.*
That made those glowering witch-men smile.

III. The Hope of their Religion

A good old negro in the slums of the town
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.
Beat on the Bible till he wore it out,
Starting the jubilee revival shout.
And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs.
And they all repented, a thousand strong,
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong
And slammed their hymn books till they shook the room
With "Glory, glory, glory,"
And "Boom, boom, Boom."

Heavy bass. With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket, and trance.

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

Exactly as in the first section.

And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.
In bright white steel they were seated round
And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.
And the twelve apostles, from their thrones on high,
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:—

"Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;
Never again will he hoo-doo you,
Never again will he hoo-doo you."
Then along that river, a thousand miles,
The vine-snared trees fell down in files.

Sung to the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices." With growing deliberation and joy.

Pioneer angels cleared the way
For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
For sacred capitals, for temples clean.
Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.
There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed *In a rather high key—as delicately as possible.*
A million boats of the angels sailed
With oars of silver, and prows of blue
And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation.
Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation;
And on through the backwoods clearing flew:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle. *To the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."*
Never again will he hoo-doo you.
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,
And only the vulture dared again
By the far, lone mountains of the moon
To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you, *Dying off into a penetrating, terrified whisper.*
Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo . . . you."

TO A GOLDEN-HAIRED GIRL IN A LOUISIANA TOWN [1]

You are a sunrise,
If a star should rise instead of the sun.
You are a moonrise,
If a star should come in the place of the moon.

[1] Reprinted from *Collected Poems* by Vachel Lindsay, by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

You are the Spring,
If a face should bloom instead of an apple-bough.
You are my love,
If your heart is as kind
As your young eyes now.

THE TRAVELLER

The moon's a devil jester
Who makes himself too free.
The rascal is not always
Where he appears to be.
Sometimes he is in my heart—
Sometimes he is in the sea;
Then tides are in my heart,
And tides are in the sea.

O traveller, abiding not
Where he pretends to be!

A NEGRO SERMON: SIMON LEGREE[1]

Legree's big house was white and green.
His cotton-fields were the best to be seen.
He had strong horses and opulent cattle,
And bloodhounds bold, with chains that would rattle.
His garret was full of curious things:
Books of magic, bags of gold,
And rabbits' feet on long twine strings,
But he went down to the Devil.

Legree, he sported a brass-buttoned coat,
A snake-skin necktie, a blood-red shirt.
Legree, he had a beard like a goat,
And a thick hairy neck, and eyes like dirt.

[1] Reprinted from *Collected Poems* by Vachel Lindsay, by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

His puffed-out cheeks were fish-belly white,
He had great long teeth, and an appetite.
He ate raw meat, 'most every meal,
And rolled his eyes till the cat would squeal.
His fist was an enormous size
To mash poor niggers that told him lies:
He was surely a witch-man in disguise.
But he went down to the Devil.

He wore hip-boots, and would wade all day
To capture his slaves that had fled away.
But he went down to the Devil.
He beat poor Uncle Tom to death
Who prayed for Legree with his last breath.
Then Uncle Tom to Eva flew,
To the high sanctoriums bright and new;
And Simon Legree stared up beneath,
And cracked his heels, and ground his teeth:
And went down to the Devil.
He crossed the yard in the storm and gloom;
He went into his grand front room.
He said, "I killed him, and I don't care."
He kicked a hound, he gave a swear;
He tightened his belt, he took a lamp,
Went down cellar to the webs and damp.
There in the middle of the mouldy floor
He heaved up a slab; he found a door—
And went down to the Devil.

His lamp blew out, but his eyes burned bright.
Simon Legree stepped down all night—
Down, down to the Devil.
Simon Legree he reached the place,
He saw one half of the human race,
He saw the Devil on a wide green throne,
Gnawing the meat from a big ham-bone,
And he said to Mister Devil:

"I see that you have much to eat—
A red ham-bone is surely sweet.
I see that you have lion's feet;
I see your frame is fat and fine,
I see you drink your poison wine—
Blood and burning turpentine."

And the Devil said to Simon Legree:
"I like your style, so wicked and free.
Come sit and share my throne with me,
And let us bark and revel."
And there they sit and gnash their teeth,
And each one wears a hop-vine wreath.
They are matching pennies and shooting craps,
They are playing poker and taking naps.
And old Legree is fat and fine:
He eats the fire, he drinks the wine—
Blood and burning turpentine—
Down, down with the Devil;
Down, down with the Devil;
Down, down with the Devil.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT * [1]

(*In Springfield, Illinois*)

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down,

* See pages 83, 147, 158, 293, 298, 400.

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Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us:—as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long,
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks of men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why;
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free:
A league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

THE VOYAGE

What is my mast? A pen.
What are my sails? Ten crescent moons.
What is my sea? A bottle of ink.
Where do I go? To heaven again.
What do I eat? The amaranth flower,
While the winds through the jungles think old tunes.
I eat that flower with ivory spoons
While the winds through the jungles play old tunes;
The songs the angels used to sing
When heaven was not old autumn, but spring—
The bold, old songs of heaven and spring.

THE FLOWER-FED BUFFALOES

The flower-fed buffaloes of the spring
In the days of long ago,
Ranged where the locomotives sing
And the prairie flowers lie low;
The tossing, blooming, perfumed grass
Is swept away by wheat,
Wheels and wheels and wheels spin by
In the spring that still is sweet.
But the flower-fed buffaloes of the spring
Left us long ago.
They gore no more, they bellow no more,
They trundle around the hills no more:—
With the Blackfeet lying low,
With the Pawnees lying low.

THE GHOSTS OF THE BUFFALOES [1]

Last night at black midnight I woke with a cry,
The windows were shaking, there was thunder on high,
The floor was a-tremble, the door was a-jar,
White fires, crimson fires, shone from afar.
I rushed to the dooryard. The city was gone.
My home was a hut without orchard or lawn.
It was mud-smear and logs near a whispering stream,
Nothing else built by man could I see in my dream . . .

Then . . .
Ghost-kings came headlong, row upon row,
Gods of the Indians, torches aglow.
They mounted the bear and the elk and the deer,
And eagles gigantic, agèd and sere,
They rode long-horn cattle, they cried "A-la-la."
They lifted the knife, the bow and the spear,
They lifted ghost-torches from dead fires below,
The midnight made grand with the cry "A-la-la."
The midnight made grand with a red-god charge,
A red-god show,
A red-god show,
"A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la."

With bodies like bronze, and terrible eyes
Came the rank and the file, with catamount cries,
Gibbering, yipping, with hollow-skull clacks,
Riding white bronchos with skeleton backs,
Scalp-hunters, beaded and spangled and bad,
Naked and lustful and foaming and mad,
Flashing primeval demoniac scorn,
Blood-thirst and pomp amid darkness reborn,

[1] Reprinted from *Collected Poems* by Vachel Lindsay, by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

Power and glory that sleep in the grass
While the winds and the snows and the great rains pass.
They crossed the gray river, thousands abreast,
They rode out in infinite lines to the west,
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,
The sky was their goal where the star-flags are furled,
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep,
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.

And the wind crept by
Alone, unkempt, unsatisfied,
The wind cried and cried—
Muttered of massacres long past,
Buffaloes in shambles vast . . .
An owl said: "Hark, what is a-wing?"
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket carolling.

Then . . .
Snuffing the lightning that crashed from on high
Rose royal old buffaloes, row upon row.
The lords of the prairie came galloping by.
And I cried in my heart "A-la-la, a-la-la.
A red-god show,
A red-god show,
A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la."

Buffaloes, buffaloes, thousands abreast,
A scourge and amazement, they swept to the west.
With black bobbing noses, with red rolling tongues,
Coughing forth steam from their leather-wrapped lungs,
Cows with their calves, bulls big and vain,
Goring the laggards, shaking the mane,
Stamping flint feet, flashing moon eyes,
Pompous and owlish, shaggy and wise.

Like sea-cliffs and caves resounded their ranks
With shoulders like waves, and undulant flanks.
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,
The sky was their goal where the star-flags are furled,
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep,
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.

I heard a cricket's cymbals play,
A scarecrow lightly flapped his rags,
And a pan that hung by his shoulder rang,
Rattled and thumped in a listless way,
And now the wind in the chimney sang,
The wind in the chimney,
The wind in the chimney,
The wind in the chimney,
Seemed to say:—
"Dream, boy, dream,
If you anywise can.
To dream is the work
Of beast or man.
Life is the west-going dream-storm's breath,
Life is a dream, the sigh of the skies,
The breath of the stars, that nod on their pillows
With their golden hair mussed over their eyes."
The locust played on his musical wing,
Sang to his mate of love's delight.
I heard the whippoorwill's soft fret.
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket say: "Good-night, good-night,
Good-night, good-night, . . . good-night."

Edwin Meade Robinson (no relation to Edwin Arlington Robinson) was born November 1, 1879, in Lima, Indiana. He engaged in newspaper work when he was scarcely out of his 'teens, joining the staff of the Indianapolis *Sentinel* in 1901. He began writing a daily poem in 1904 and, for years, has conducted a column of prose and verse in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*.

Mere Melodies (1918) is a collection of Robinson's light and sentimental verse, an uneven collection. *Piping and Panning* (1920) is a much fresher and far more vigorous assembling of this versifier's humorous and burlesque idioms. One of our most adroit technicians, he is especially happy in interior rhyming; the poem "Halcyon Days" contains, beside the end-rhymes, rhymes hidden within the lines and others running over from line to line.

"HALCYON DAYS"

Ere yet the giants of modern science had gone a-slumming
in smelly slums,
And through the Ghettos and lazarettos had put in plumbing (and pulled out plums!)
When wily wizards in inky vizards employed their talents at homicide,
And poisoned goblets for faithless squablets by knightly gallants were justified;
When maids were fairest, and baths were rarest, and thaumaturgy was wrought by dames,
When courts were rotten and faith forgotten, and none but clergy could write their names—

When he who flouted the Church, or doubted, would find his neck fast in hempen ruff,
And saint and sinner thought eggs for dinner and beer for breakfast the proper stuff;
When men were scary of witch and fairy, of haunted castle, of spook and elf,
When every mixer of cough-elixir was thought a vassal of Nick himself;

When income taxes and prophylaxis and Comic Sections
were yet unborn,
When Leagues of Nations and Spring Vacations and Fall
Elections were held in scorn—

When all brave fellows would fight duellos with sword and
dagger, with lance and mace,
When good men guzzled until, clean fuzzled, they'd reel and
stagger about the place;
When pious journeys and jousts and tourneys brought high
adventure and secret tryst,
When knives were many, but forks not any—'twas fist to
trencher, and mouth to fist!—
Oh, men had chances for true romances, for fame and glory,
and knightly acts . . .
(And childish quarrels and beastly morals, if song and story
would stick to facts!)

Franklin P. Adams

Franklin Pierce Adams, better known to the readers of his column as F. P. A., was born in Chicago, Illinois, November 15, 1881. He attended the University of Michigan (1899-1900) and, after a brief career as an insurance agent, plunged into journalism. Adams had already been an ardent contributor to B. L. T.'s "A Line o' Type or Two" and, in 1903, he began conducting a column of his own on the Chicago *Journal.* Late in 1904, he came to New York, running his "Always in Good Humor" section on *The Evening Mail* until 1914, when he started "The Conning Tower" for the New York *Tribune,* transferring it some years later to the New York *World.*

Adams is the author of six volumes of a light verse that is unusually skilful. *Tobogganing on Parnassus* (1909), *In Other Words* (1912), *By and Large* (1914), *Weights and Measures* (1917) *Something Else Again* (1920) and *So There* (1923) reveal a spirit which is essentially one of mockery. One admires these books for their impudent—and faithful—paraphrases of Horace and

Propertius, for their last-line twists *à la* O. Henry (with whom Adams wrote a comic opera that never reached New York), for the ease with which their author springs his surprises and, perhaps most of all, for the healthy satire that runs sharply through all of his colloquial and dexterous lines.

THE RICH MAN

The rich man has his motor-car,
  His country and his town estate.
He smokes a fifty-cent cigar
  And jeers at Fate.

He frivols through the livelong day,
  He knows not Poverty, her pinch.
His lot seems light, his heart seems gay;
  He has a cinch.

Yet though my lamp burns low and dim,
  Though I must slave for livelihood—
Think you that I would change with him?
  You bet I would!

THOSE TWO BOYS

When Bill was a lad he was terribly bad.
  He worried his parents a lot;
He'd lie and he'd swear and pull little girls' hair;
  His boyhood was naught but a blot.

At play and in school he would fracture each rule—
  In mischief from autumn to spring;
And the villagers knew when to manhood he grew
  He would never amount to a thing.

When Jim was a child he was not very wild;
He was known as a good little boy;
He was honest and bright and the teacher's delight—
To his mother and father a joy.

All the neighbors were sure that his virtue'd endure,
That his life would be free of a spot;
They were certain that Jim had a great head on him
And that Jim would amount to a lot.

And Jim grew to manhood and honor and fame
And bears a good name;
While Bill is shut up in a dark prison cell—
You never can tell.

John G. Neihardt

John Gneisenau Neihardt was born in Sharpsburg, Illinois, January 8, 1881. He completed a scientific course at Nebraska Normal College in 1897 and lived among the Omaha Indians for six years (1901-7), studying their customs, characteristics and legends.

Although he had already published two books, *A Bundle of Myrrh* (1908) was his first volume to attract notice. It was full of enthusiasm and an insistent virility—qualities which were extended (and overemphasized) in *Man-Song* (1909). Neihardt found a richer note and a new restraint in *The Stranger at the Gate* (1911), the best of the lyrics from these three volumes appearing in *The Quest* (1916).

Neihardt meanwhile had been going deeper into folk-lore, the results of which appeared in *The Song of Hugh Glass* (1915) and *The Song of Three Friends* (1919). The latter, in 1920, divided the annual prize offered by the Poetry Society, halving the honors with Gladys Cromwell's *Poems*. These two of Neihardt's are detailed long poems, part of a projected epic series celebrating the winning of the West by the pioneers. What prevents both volumes from fulfilling the breadth at which they aim is the disparity between the author's story and his style; essentially racy

narratives are recited in an archaic and incongruous speech. Yet, in spite of a false rhetoric and a locution that considers prairies and trappers in terms of "Ilion," "Iseult," "Clotho," the "dim far shore of Styx," Neihardt has achieved his effects with no little skill. Dramatic, stern, and conceived with a genuine dignity, his major works are American in feeling if not in execution.

WHEN I AM DEAD

When I am dead and nervous hands have thrust
My body downward into careless dust;
I think the grave cannot suffice to hold
My spirit prisoned in the sunless mould!
Some subtle memory of you shall be
A resurrection of the life of me.
Yea, I shall be, because I love you so,
The speechless spirit of all things that grow.
You shall not touch a flower but it shall be
Like a caress upon the cheek of me.
I shall be patient in the common grass
That I may feel your footfall when you pass.
I shall be kind as rain and pure as dew,
A loving spirit 'round the life of you.
When your soft cheeks by perfumed winds are fanned,
'Twill be my kiss—and you will understand.
But when some sultry, storm-bleared sun has set,
I will be lightning if you dare forget!

CRY OF THE PEOPLE[1]

Tremble before thy chattels,
Lords of the scheme of things!
Fighters of all earth's battles,
Ours is the might of kings!

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Quest* by John G. Neihardt.

Guided by seers and sages,
The world's heart-beat for a drum,
Snapping the chains of ages,
Out of the night we come!

Lend us no ear that pities!
Offer no almoner's hand!
Alms for the builders of cities!
When will you understand?
Down with your pride of birth
And your golden gods of trade!
A man is worth to his mother, Earth,
All that a man has made!

We are the workers and makers.
We are no longer dumb!
Tremble, O Shirkers and Takers!
Sweeping the earth—we come!
Ranked in the world-wide dawn,
Marching into the day!
The night is gone and the sword is drawn
And the scabbard is thrown away!

LET ME LIVE OUT MY YEARS [1]

Let me live out my years in heat of blood!
Let me die drunken with the dreamer's wine!
Let me not see this soul-house built of mud
Go toppling to the dust—a vacant shrine.

Let me go quickly, like a candle light
Snuffed out just at the heyday of its glow.
Give me high noon—and let it then be night!
Thus would I go.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Quest* by John G. Neihardt.

And grant that when I face the grisly Thing,
My song may trumpet down the gray Perhaps.
Let me be as a tune-swept fiddlestring
That feels the Master Melody—and snaps!

Witter Bynner

Witter Bynner was born in Brooklyn, New York, August 10, 1881. He was graduated from Harvard in 1902 and has been assistant editor of various periodicals as well as adviser to publishers. Recently, he has spent much of his time lecturing on poetry and travelling in the Orient. He lives most of the year in Santa Fé, New Mexico.

Young Harvard (1907), the first of Bynner's volumes, was, as the name implies, a celebration of his *alma mater*. *The New World* (1915) is a much riper and far more ambitious effort. In this extended poem, Bynner sought—almost too determinedly—to translate the ideals of democracy into verse. Neither of these volumes displays its author's gifts at their best, for Bynner is, first of all, a lyric poet. *Grenstone Poems* (1917) and *A Canticle of Pan* (1920) reveal a more natural singing voice. Bynner harmonizes in many keys; transposing, modulating and shifting from one tonality to another. This very ease is his chief defect, for Bynner's facility leads him not only to write too much, but in too many different styles. Many of his poems seem like sounding-boards that echo the tones of every poet except the composer of them. Instead of a fusion of gifts we have, too often, a disintegration.

When Bynner is least dexterous he is most ingratiating. When he does not try to sound the whole gamut of modern poetry from the lyrics of A. E. Housman to the attenuated epigrams of Ezra Pound, he can strike his own note with clarity and precision. Even in *The Beloved Stranger* (1919), where the borrowed accents of his *alter ego* are only too apparent, one is arrested by lines of musical charm and fluency.

Under the pseudonym "Emanuel Morgan," Bynner was co-author with Arthur Davison Ficke (writing under the name of

"Anne Knish") of *Spectra* (1916). *Spectra* was a serious burlesque of some of the extreme manifestations of modern poetic tendencies —a remarkable hoax that deceived many of the radical propagandists as well as most of the conservative critics. A volume of his many translations from the Chinese is in preparation.

GRASS-TOPS

What bird are you in the grass-tops?
Your poise is enough of an answer,
With your wing-tips like up-curving fingers
Of the slow-moving hands of a dancer . . .

And what is so nameless as beauty,
Which poets, who give it a name,
Are only unnaming forever?—
Content, though it go, that it came.

VOICES

O there were lights and laughter
  And the motions to and fro
Of people as they enter
  And people as they go . . .

And there were many voices
  Vying at the feast,
But mostly I remember
  Yours—who spoke the least.

A FARMER REMEMBERS LINCOLN *[1]

"Lincoln?—
Well, I was in the old Second Maine,
The first regiment in Washington from the Pine Tree State.
Of course I didn't get the butt of the clip;
We was there for guardin' Washington—
We was all green.

"I ain't never ben to the theayter in my life—
I didn't know how to behave.
I ain't never ben since.
I can see as plain as my hat the box where he sat in
When he was shot.
I can tell you, sir, there was a panic
When we found our President was in the shape he was in!
Never saw a soldier in the world but what liked him.

"Yes, sir. His looks was kind o' hard to forget.
He was a spare man,
An old farmer.
Everything was all right, you know,
But he wasn't a smooth-appearin' man at all—
Not in no ways;
Thin-faced, long-necked,
And a swellin' kind of a thick lip like.

"And he was a jolly old fellow—always cheerful;
He wasn't so high but the boys could talk to him their own ways.
While I was servin' at the Hospital
He'd come in and say, 'You look nice in here,'
Praise us up, you know.

* See pages 83, 147, 158, 279, 298, 400.

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Grenstone Poems* by Witter Bynner. Copyright, 1917, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

And he'd bend over and talk to the boys—
And he'd talk so good to 'em—so close—
That's why I call him a farmer.
I don't mean that everything about him wasn't all right, you understand,
It's just—well, I was a farmer—
And he was my neighbor, anybody's neighbor.
I guess even you young folks would 'a' liked him."

TRAIN-MATES [1]

Outside hove Shasta, snowy height on height,
A glory; but a negligible sight,
For you had often seen a mountain-peak
But not my paper. So we came to speak . . .
A smoke, a smile,—a good way to commence
The comfortable exchange of difference!
You a young engineer, five feet eleven,
Forty-five chest, with football in your heaven,
Liking a road-bed newly built and clean,
Your fingers hot to cut away the green
Of brush and flowers that bring beside a track
The kind of beauty steel lines ought to lack,—
And I a poet, wistful of my betters,
Reading George Meredith's high-hearted letters,
Joining betweenwhile in the mingled speech
Of a drummer, circus-man, and parson, each
Absorbing to himself—as I to me
And you to you—a glad identity!

After a time, when others went away,
A curious kinship made us choose to stay,
Which I could tell you now; but at the time
You thought of baseball teams and I of rhyme,

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Until we found that we were college men
And smoked more easily and smiled again;
And I from Cambridge cried, the poet still:
"I know your fine Greek theatre on the hill
At Berkeley!" With your happy Grecian head
Upraised, "I never saw the place," you said—
"Once I was free of class, I always went
Out to the field."

Young Engineer, you meant
As fair a tribute to the better part
As ever I did. Beauty of the heart
Is evident in temples. But it breathes
Alive where athletes quicken curly wreaths,
Which are the lovelier because they die.
You are a poet quite as much as I,
Though differences appear in what we do,
And I an athlete quite as much as you.
Because you half-surmise my quarter-mile
And I your quatrain, we could greet and smile.
Who knows but we shall look again and find
The circus-man and drummer, not behind
But leading in our visible estate—
As discus-thrower and as laureate?

THE SINGING HUNTSMAN

The huntswoman-moon was my mother,
And the song-man, Apollo, my sire;
And I know either trick like the other,
The trick of the bow and the lyre.

And when beauty darts by me or lingers,
When it opens or folds its wing,
On bow and on lyre are my fingers,
And I shoot, and I sing.

James Oppenheim was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, May 24, 1882. Two years later his family moved to New York City, where he has lived most of his life. After a public school education, he took special courses at Columbia University (1901-3) and engaged in settlement work, acting in the capacity of assistant head worker of the Hudson Guild Settlement, and superintendent of the Hebrew Technical School for Girls (1904-7). His studies and experiences on the lower East Side of New York furnished the material for his first and most popular book of short stories, *Doctor Rast* (1909).

Oppenheim's initial venture as a poet, *Monday Morning and Other Poems* (1909), was a tentative collection, imitative and experimental. In spite of its obvious indebtedness to Whitman, most of the verses are in formal meters and regular (though ragged) rhyme. Beauty is sought, but seldom captured here; the message is coughed out between bursts of eloquence and fits of stammering.

Songs for the New Age (1914) made Oppenheim his own liberator. The stammering has gone, the uncouth dissonances have resolved. One listens to a speech that, echoing the Whitmanic sonority, develops a music that is strangely Biblical and yet local. It is the expression of an ancient people reacting to modernity, of a race in solution. (See Preface.) This volume, like all of Oppenheim's subsequent work, is analysis in terms of poetry; a slow searching beneath the musical surface that attempts to diagnose the tortured soul of man and the twisted times he lives in. The old Isaiah note, with a new introspection, rises out of such poems as "The Slave," "We Dead," "Tasting the Earth"; the music and imagery of the Psalms are heard in "The Flocks," and "The Runner in the Skies."

War and Laughter (1916) holds much of its predecessor's exaltation. The Semitic blend of delight and disillusion—that quality which hates the world for its shams and hypocrisies and loves it in spite of them—is revealed in "Greed," in the ironic "Report on the Planet Earth" and the brightly affirmative "Laughter."

The Book of Self (1917) is less notable, an imperfect fusion. Oppenheim's preoccupation with analytical psychology mars the effect of the long passages which, in themselves, contain flashes of clairvoyance. *The Solitary* (1919) is a great stride forward; its major section, a long symbolic poem called "The Sea," breathes

the same note that was the burden of the earlier books—"We are flesh on the way to godhood"—with greater strength and still greater control.

The Mystic Warrior (1921) is an autobiography in free verse. It is a chronicle of inhibition, the effort of an artist to find himself and freedom in a rigid, mechanistic environment. Oppenheim's studies and practise in psychoanalysis are evident in this volume; the chief figure emerges as a weak and groping stumbler towards immensities, a figure pulled between self-contempt and over-reaching assurance. *Golden Bird* (1923) is a return to Oppenheim's less personal mysticism. It suffers somewhat from loquacity and a curious "yearning back." But some of the poems (such as "Hebrews") rise from a rather cloying catalog of perished beauty, and a "divine discontent" runs through the lines with a restless challenge.

The Sea, Oppenheim's most comprehensive volume, was published in 1923. It includes the best of all his previous books of poetry with the addition of several "connecting" verses.

Besides his poetry, Oppenheim has published several volumes of short stories, four novels, and two poetic plays. During 1916-17 he was editor of that promising but short-lived magazine, *The Seven Arts.*

THE SLAVE

They set the slave free, striking off his chains . . .
Then he was as much of a slave as ever.

He was still chained to servility,
He was still manacled to indolence and sloth,
He was still bound by fear and superstition,
By ignorance, suspicion, and savagery . . .
His slavery was not in the chains,
But in himself. . . .

They can only set free men free . . .
And there is no need of that:
Free men set themselves free.

THE RUNNER IN THE SKIES

Who is the runner in the skies,
With her blowing scarf of stars,
And our Earth and sun hovering like bees about her blossoming heart?
Her feet are on the winds, where space is deep,
Her eyes are nebulous and veiled;
She hurries through the night to a far lover . . .

THE LINCOLN CHILD *

Clearing in the forest,
In the wild Kentucky forest,
And the stars, wintry stars strewn above!
O Night that is the starriest
Since Earth began to roll—
For a Soul
Is born out of Love!
Mother love, father love, love of Eternal God—
Stars have pushed aside to let him through—
Through heaven's sun-sown deeps
One sparkling ray of God
Strikes the clod—
(And while an angel-host through wood and clearing sweeps!)
Born in the wild
The Child—
Naked, ruddy, new,
Wakes with the piteous human cry and at the mother-heart sleeps.

To the mother wild berries and honey,
To the father awe without end,

* See pages 83, 147, 158, 279, 293, 400.

To the child a swaddling of flannel—
And a dawn rolls sharp and sunny
And the skies of winter bend
To see the first sweet word penned
In the godliest human annal.

Frail Mother of the Wilderness,
How strange the world shines in
And the cabin becomes chapel
And the baby lies secure—
Sweet Mother of the Wilderness,
New worlds for you begin,
You have tasted of the apple
That giveth wisdom sure. . . .

Soon in the wide wilderness,
On a branch blown over a creek,
Up a trail of the wild coon,
In a lair of the wild bee,
The rugged boy, by danger's stress,
Learnt the speech the wild things speak,
Learnt the Earth's eternal tune
Of strife-engendered harmony—
Went to school where Life itself was master,
Went to church where Earth was minister—
And in Danger and Disaster
Felt his future manhood stir!

All about him the land,
Eastern cities, Western prairie,
Wild, immeasurable, grand;
But he was lost where blossomy boughs make airy
Bowers in the forest, and the sand
Makes brook-water a clear mirror that gives back
Green branches and trunks black
And clouds across the heavens lightly fanned.

Yet all the Future dreams, eager to waken,
Within that woodland soul—
And the bough of boy has only to be shaken
That the fruit drop whereby this Earth shall roll
A little nearer God than ever before.
Little recks he of war,
Of national millions waiting on his word—
Dreams still the Event unstirred
In the heart of the boy, the little babe of the wild—
But the years hurry and the tide of the sea
Of Time flows fast and ebbs, and he, even he,
Must leave the wilderness, the wood-haunts wild—
Soon shall the cyclone of Humanity
Tearing through Earth suck up this little child
And whirl him to the top, where he shall be
Riding the storm-column in the lightning-stroke,
Calm at the peak, while down below worlds rage,
And Earth goes out in blood and battle-smoke,
And leaves him with the Sun—an epoch and an age!

And lo, as he grew ugly, gaunt,
And gnarled his way into a man,
What wisdom came to feed his want,
What worlds came near to let him scan!
And as he fathomed through and through
Our dark and sorry human scheme,
He knew what Shakespeare never knew,
What Dante never dared to dream—
That Men are one
Beneath the sun,
And before God are equal souls—
This truth was his,
And this it is
That round him such a glory rolls—
For not alone he knew it as a truth,
He made it of his blood, and of his brain—
He crowned it on the day when piteous Booth

Sent a whole land to weeping with world pain—
When a black cloud blotted the sun
And men stopped in the streets to sob,
To think Old Abe was dead.
Dead, and the day's work still undone,
Dead, and war's ruining heart athrob,
And earth with fields of carnage freshly spread—
Millions died fighting,
But in this man we mourned
Those millions, and one other—
And the States to-day uniting,
North and South,
East and West,
Speak with a people's mouth
A rhapsody of rest
To him our beloved best,
Our big, gaunt, homely brother—
Our huge Atlantic coast-storm in a shawl,
Our cyclone in a smile—our President,
Who knew and loved us all
With love more eloquent
Than his own words—with Love that in real deeds was spent. . . .

O living God, O Thou who living art,
And real, and near, draw, as at that babe's birth,
Into our souls and sanctify our Earth—
Let down Thy strength that we endure
Mighty and pure
As mothers and fathers of our own Lincoln-child—
Make us more wise, more true, more strong, more mild,
That we may day by day
Rear this wild blossom through its soft petals of clay;
That hour by hour
We may endow it with more human power
Than is our own—
That it may reach the goal

Our Lincoln long has shown!
O Child, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone,
Soul torn from out our Soul!
May you be great, and pure, and beautiful—
A Soul to search this world
To be a father, brother, comrade, son,
A toiler powerful;
A man whose toil is done
One with God's Law above:
Work wrought through Love!

NIGHT NOTE

A little moon was restless in Eternity
And, shivering beneath the stars,
Dropped in the hiding arms of the western hill.
Night's discord ceased:
The visible universe moved in an endless rhythm:
The wheel of the heavens turned to the pulse of a cricket in the grass.

TASTING THE EARTH

In a dark hour, tasting the Earth.

As I lay on my couch in the muffled night, and the rain lashed my window,
And my forsaken heart would give me no rest, no pause and no peace,
Though I turned my face far from the wailing of my bereavement. . . .
Then I said: I will eat of this sorrow to its last shred,
I will take it unto me utterly,
I will see if I be not strong enough to contain it. . . .
What do I fear? Discomfort?
How can it hurt me, this bitterness?

The miracle, then!
Turning toward it, and giving up to it,
I found it deeper than my own self. . . .
O dark great mother-globe so close beneath me . . .
It was she with her inexhaustible grief,
Ages of blood-drenched jungles, and the smoking of craters,
and the roar of tempests,
And moan of the forsaken seas,
It was she with the hills beginning to walk in the shapes of
the dark-hearted animals,
It was she risen, dashing away tears and praying to dumb
skies, in the pomp-crumbling tragedy of man . . .
It was she, container of all griefs, and the buried dust of
broken hearts,
Cry of the christs and the lovers and the child-stripped
mothers,
And ambition gone down to defeat, and the battle overborne,
And the dreams that have no waking. . . .

My heart became her ancient heart:
On the food of the strong I fed, on dark strange life itself:
Wisdom-giving and sombre with the unremitting love of
ages. . . .
There was dank soil in my mouth,
And bitter sea on my lips,
In a dark hour, tasting the Earth.

HEBREWS

I come of a mighty race . . . I come of a very mighty
race . . .
Adam was a mighty man, and Noah a captain of the moving
waters,
Moses was a stern and splendid king, yea, so was Moses . . .
Give me more songs like David's to shake my throat to the
pit of the belly,
And let me roll in the Isaiah thunder . . .

Ho! the mightiest of our young men was born under a star
in midwinter . . .
His name is written on the sun and it is frosted on the
moon . . .
Earth breaths him like an eternal spring; he is a second sky
over the Earth.

Mighty race! mighty race!—my flesh, my flesh
Is a cup of song,
Is a well in Asia . . .
I go about with a dark heart where the Ages sit in a divine
thunder . . .
My blood is cymbal-clashed and the anklets of the dancers
tinkle there . . .
Harp and psaltery, harp and psaltery make drunk my
spirit . . .
I am of the terrible people, I am of the strange He-
brews . . .
Amongst the swarms fixed like the rooted stars, my folk is a
streaming Comet,
The Wanderer of Eternity, the eternal Wandering Jew . . .

Ho! we have turned against the mightiest of our young men
And in that denial we have taken on the Christ,
And the two thieves beside the Christ,
And the Magdalen at the feet of the Christ,
And the Judas with thirty silver pieces selling the Christ,
And our twenty centuries in Europe have the shape of a
Cross
On which we have hung in disaster and glory . . .

Mighty race! mighty race!—my flesh, my flesh
Is a cup of song,
Is a well in Asia.

Hermann Hagedorn was born July 18, 1882, in New York City. He was class poet at Harvard, receiving his B.A. from that University in 1907. He attended Columbia University 1908-09.

Hagedorn began his career as a poet, "A Troop of the Guard" being one of the best class poems of the generation. Somewhat later, his gift suffered a setback. His *Life of Roosevelt* (1918) attracted attention, not only in literary but political circles, and in 1920 certain factors in the Republican Party persuaded him to undertake a volume glorifying their potential candidate. The result was *That Human Being, Leonard Wood* (1920), a piece of dull hack work which Hagedorn's friends have been eager to forget. Specializing in Rooseveltania, Hagedorn published *Roosevelt in the Bad Lands* (1921) and a selection of speeches and writings under the title *The Americanism of Theodore Roosevelt* (1923).

Poems and Ballads (1913) contains much that never rises above prettiness and technical fluency. However, a few of the ballads have dramatic power as well as dexterity. "Wings" has a free gesture in its rapid pace, and "Doors" is a sonnet in the best tradition which no anthologist of the period can afford to miss.

DOORS

Like a young child who to his mother's door
  Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,
  And finds the door shut, and with troubled face
Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er
Calling, storms at the panel—so before
  A door that will not open, sick and numb,
  I listen for a word that will not come,
And know, at last, I may not enter more.

Silence! And through the silence and the dark
  By that closed door, the distant sob of tears
    Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores
The spectral sea; and through the sobbing, hark!
  Down the fair-chambered corridor of years,
    The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors.

Alice Corbin (Mrs. William Penhallow Henderson) was born in St. Louis, Missouri. She has been Associate Editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* since 1912, co-editing (with Harriet Monroe) *The New Poetry, An Anthology* (1917, Revised Edition 1923). Since 1916 she has lived in New Mexico.

The Spinning Woman of the Sky (1912) contains few hints of originality. It is cast in an entirely different key than Miss Corbin's later efforts. Her recent verses, many of them uncollected, are much richer; they reveal a close contact with primitive people and native folk-lore. Her southern and far western sketches are particularly colorful; a volume of New Mexico studies, *Red Earth* (1920), being full of noteworthy and sympathetic records. Even in her paraphrases of folk-tunes, she maintains her own low-pitched voice.

ECHOES OF CHILDHOOD

(*A Folk-Medley*)

Uncle Jim

Old Uncle Jim was as blind as a mole,
But he could fiddle Virginia Reels,
Till you felt the sap run out of your heels,
Till you knew the devil had got your soul—

Down the middle and swing yo' partners,
Up agin and salute her low,
Shake yo' foot an' keep a-goin',
Down the middle an' do-se-do!

Mind yo' manners an' doan git keerless,
Swing yo' lady and bow full low,
S'lute yo' partner an' turn yo' neighbor,
Gran'-right-an'-left, and aroun' you go!

. . .

Delphy

Delphy's breast was wide and deep,
A shelf to lay a child asleep,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low;

Rocking like a lifted boat
On lazy tropic seas afloat,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low.

Delphy, when my mother died,
Taught me wisdom, curbed my pride,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low;
And when she laid her body down,
It shone, a jewel, in His crown,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low.

. . .

(*Underneath the southern moon*
I was cradled to the tune
Of the banjo and the fiddle
And the plaintive negro croon.)

MANDY'S RELIGION

I'se got religion an' I doan care
Who knows that God an' I are square,
I wuz carryin' home my mistis' wash
When God came an' spoke to me out'n de hush.

An' I th'ew de wash up inter de air,
An' I climbed a tree to de golden stair;
Ef it hadn't a been fur Mistah Wright
I'd had ter stayed dere all de night!

. . .

(*Underneath the southern moon*
I was cradled to the tune
Of the banjo and the fiddle
And the plaintive negro croon.)

BETSY'S BOY

Betsy's boy could shuffle and clog,
Though you couldn't get him to saw a log,

Laziest boy about the place
Till he started to dance—and you saw his face!
It was all lit up like a mask of bronze
Set in a niche between temple gongs—
For he would dance and never stop
Till he fell on the floor like a spun-out top.
His feet hung loose from his supple waist,
He danced without stopping, he danced without haste.
Like Shiva the Hindu his feet were bound
In the rhythm of stars and of streams underground:

Banjo playin' and de sanded floor,
Fiddle cryin', always callin' more,
Can't help dancin' though de preacher says
Can't git to heaven doin' no sich ways,
Can't help dancin' though de devil stan's
With a pitch-fork waitin' in his brimstone han's;
Got—ter—keep—dancin',—can't—stop—now
Got—ter—keep—dancin',—I—doan—know—how . . .

Banjo playin' and de sanded floor,
Fiddle cryin', always callin' more,
People's faces lookin' scared an' white,
Hands a clappin' an' eyes starin' bright.
Can't help dancin' though de candle's dyin',
Can't help dancin' while de fiddle's cryin';
Got — ter —keep—dancin',—can't—stop—now,
Got—ter—keep—dancin',—I—doan—know—how!

THE OLD
NEGRO ALONE

Who dat droppin' froo de crumblin' roof?—
Mah soul am ole, I done sinned mah sin;
I'se waitin' fo' de Lawd to let me in:
Doan you dare show no debbil's hoof
Drappin' on down froo de hole in de roof!

Who dat croakin' on de winder-sill?—
I'll tek dis poker in mah han'
An' mek you join de joyless ban'
Ob dem dat's crossed de holy will
Ef yo' doan stop croakin' on de winder-sill!

O Lawd, hab mussy! Mah soul am ole,
I'se heahed de cock crowin' an' de bayin' houn';
Hit's still an' dark in de undergroun',
I doan wan' ter lie in de rain an' de cole:
Lawd, hab mussy, an' save mah soul!

LOVE ME AT LAST

Love me at last, or if you will not,
  Leave me;
Hard words could never, as these half-words,
  Grieve me:
Love me at last—or leave me.

Love me at last, or let the last word uttered
  Be but your own;
Love me or leave me—as a cloud, a vapor,
  Or a bird flown.
Love me at last—I am but sliding water
  Over a stone.

Lola Ridge was born in Dublin, Ireland, leaving there in infancy and spending her childhood in Sydney, Australia. After living some years in New Zealand, she returned to Australia to study art. In 1907, she came to the United States, supporting herself for three years by writing fiction for the popular magazines. She stopped this work only, as she says, "because I found I would have to do so if I wished to survive as an artist." For several years she earned her living in a variety of ways—as organizer for an educational movement, as advertisement writer, as illustrator, artist's model, factory-worker, etc. In 1918, *The New Republic* published her long poem, *The Ghetto,* and Miss Ridge, until then totally unknown, became the "discovery" of the year.

Her volume, *The Ghetto and Other Poems* (1918), contains one poem that is brilliant, several that are powerful and none that is mediocre. Her title-poem is its pinnacle; in it Miss Ridge touches strange heights. It is essentially a poem of the city, of its sodden brutalities, its sudden beauties. Swift figures shine from these lines, like barbaric colors leaping out of darkness; images that are surprising but never strained glow with a condensed clarity. In her other poems—especially in "The Song of Iron," "Faces" and the poignant portrait "Marie"—the same dignity is maintained, though with somewhat less magic.

Sun-Up (1920) is less integrated, more frankly experimental. But the same vibrancy and restrained power that distinguished her preceding book are manifest here. Her delineations are sensitive and subtle, her phrases vivid yet natural; she accomplishes the maximum in effects with a minimum of effort.

PASSAGES FROM "THE GHETTO"

Old Sodos no longer makes saddles.
He has forgotten how . . .
Time spins like a crazy dial in his brain,
And night by night
I see the love-gesture of his arm
In its green-greasy coat-sleeve
Circling the Book,

And the candles gleaming starkly
On the blotched-paper whiteness of his face,
Like a miswritten psalm . . .
Night by night
I hear his lifted praise,
Like a broken whinnying
Before the Lord's shut gate.

. . .

Lights go out
And the stark trunks of the factories
Melt into the drawn darkness,
Sheathing like a seamless garment.

And mothers take home their babies,
Waxen and delicately curled,
Like little potted flowers closed under the stars. . . .

Lights go out . . .
And colors rush together,
Fusing and floating away.
Pale worn gold like the settings of old jewels . . .
Mauve, exquisite, tremulous, and luminous purples,
And burning spires in aureoles of light
Like shimmering auras.
They are covering up the pushcarts . . .
Now all have gone save an old man with mirrors—
Little oval mirrors like tiny pools.
He shuffles up a darkened street
And the moon burnishes his mirrors till they shine like phosphorus. . . .
The moon like a skull,
Staring out of eyeless sockets at the old men trundling home the pushcarts.

. . .

A sallow dawn is in the sky
As I enter my little green room.
Without, the frail moon,

Worn to a silvery tissue,
Throws a faint glamour on the roofs,
And down the shadowy spires
Lights tip-toe out . . .
Softly as when lovers close street doors.

Out of the Battery
A little wind
Stirs idly—as an arm
Trails over a boat's side in dalliance—
Rippling the smooth dead surface of the heat,
And Hester street,
Like a forlorn woman over-borne
By many babies at her teats,
Turns on her trampled bed to meet the day.

FACES

A late snow beats
With cold white fists upon the tenements—
Hurriedly drawing blinds and shutters,
Like tall old slatterns
Pulling aprons about their heads.

Lights slanting out of Mott Street
Gibber out,
Or dribble through bar-room slits,
Anonymous shapes
Conniving behind shuttered panes
Caper and disappear . . .
Where the Bowery
Is throbbing like a fistula
Back of her ice-scabbed fronts.

Livid faces
Glimmer in furtive doorways,

Or spill out of the black pockets of alleys,
Smears of faces like muddied beads,
Making a ghastly rosary
The night mumbles over
And the snow with its devilish and silken whisper . . .
Patrolling arcs
Blowing shrill blasts over the Bread Line
Stalk them as they pass,
Silent as though accouched of the darkness,
And the wind noses among them,
    Like a skunk
That roots about the heart . . .

Colder:
And the Elevated slams upon the silence
Like a ponderous door.
Then all is still again,
Save for the wind fumbling over
The emptily swaying faces—
The wind rummaging
Like an old Jew . . .

Faces in glimmering rows . . .
(No sign of the abject life—
Not even a blasphemy . . .)
But the spindle legs keep time
To a limping rhythm,
And the shadows twitch upon the snow
    Convulsively—
As though death played
With some ungainly dolls.

NEW ORLEANS

Do you remember
Honey-melon moon
Dripping thick sweet light

Where Canal Street saunters off by herself among quiet
trees?
And the faint decayed patchouli—
Fragrance of New Orleans . . .
New Orleans,
Like a dead tube rose
Upheld in the warm air . . .
Miraculously whole.

WIND IN THE ALLEYS

Wind, rising in the alleys,
My spirit lifts in you like a banner
streaming free of hot walls.
You are full of unshaped dreams . . .
You are laden with beginnings . . .
There is hope in you . . . not sweet . . .
acrid as blood in the mouth.
Come into my tossing dust
Scattering the peace of old deaths,
Wind rising out of the alleys
Carrying stuff of flame.

MARIE

Marie's face is a weathered sign
To the palace of gliding cars
Over the bend where the trolley dips:
A dime for a wired rose,
Nickel-a-ride to the zig-zag stars,
And then men in elegant clothes,
That feed you on cardboard ships,
And the sea-floats so fine!—
Like a green and gorgeous bubble
God blew out of his lips.

When Marie carries down the stair
The ritual of her face,
Your greeting takes her unaware,
And her glance is timid-bold
As a dog's unsure of its place.
With that hair, of the rubbed-off gold
Of a wedding-ring worn to a thread,
In a halo about the head,
And those luminous eyes in their rims of paint,
She looks a bedizened saint.

But when the worn moon, like a face still beautiful,
Wavers above the Battery,
And light comes in, mauve-gray,
Squeezing through shutters of furnished rooms
Till only corners hold spots of darkness—
As a tablecloth its purple stains
When a festival is ended—
Then Marie creeps into the house.

The paint is lonesome on her cheek.
The paint is gone from off her mouth
That curls back loosely from her teeth.
She pushes slackly at the dawn
That crawls upon the yellow blind,
And enters like an aimless moth
Whose dim wings hover and alight
Upon the blurred face of the clock,
Or on the pallor of her feet—
Or anything that's white.
Until dispersed upon the sheet,
All limp, her waxen body lies
In its delinquent grace,
Like a warm bent candle
That flares about its place.

Arthur Davison Ficke was born at Davenport, Iowa, November 10, 1883. He received his A.B. at Harvard (1904), studied for the law and was admitted to the bar in 1908. In 1919, after two years' service in France, he gave up his law practice and devoted himself to literature exclusively.

Ficke is the author of ten volumes of verse, the most representative of which are *Sonnets of a Portrait Painter* (1914), *The Man on the Hilltop* (1915) and *An April Elegy* (1917). In these, the author has distilled a warm spirituality, combining freshness of vision with an intensified seriousness.

Having been an expert collector and student of Japanese prints, Ficke has written two books on this theme. His intellectual equipment is reinforced by a strong sense of satire. Writing under the pseudonym "Anne Knish," he was one of the co-authors (with Witter Bynner) of *Spectra* (1916), which, caricaturing some of the wilder outgrowths of the new poetry, was taken seriously by a majority of the critics and proved to be a brilliant hoax.

Out of Silence and Other Poems (1924) is a record of the romanticist's effort to escape a world he half understands and wholly fears. The poet—at least so his poems assure us—is "homesick in modernity." Even the world's beauty hurts; loveliness does not fulfill him, he is frustrated by it. Nevertheless, the foretold failure of his "secret, impossible hopes" does not prevent him from wringing an occasional if too protracted poignance from his defeat.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD WOMAN

She limps with halting painful pace,
  Stops, wavers and creeps on again;
Peers up with dim and questioning face,
  Void of desire or doubt or pain.

Her cheeks hang gray in waxen folds
  Wherein there stirs no blood at all.
A hand, like bundled cornstalks, holds
  The tatters of a faded shawl.

Where was a breast, sunk bones she clasps;
A knot jerks where were woman-hips;
A ropy throat sends writhing gasps
Up to the tight line of her lips.

Here strong the city's pomp is poured . . .
She stands, unhuman, bleak, aghast:
An empty temple of the Lord
From which the jocund Lord has passed.

He has builded him another house,
Whenceforth his flame, renewed and bright,
Shines stark upon these weathered brows
Abandoned to the final night.

THE THREE SISTERS

Gone are the three, those sisters rare
With wonder-lips and eyes ashine.
One was wise and one was fair,
And one was mine.

Ye mourners, weave for the sleeping hair
Of only two your ivy vine.
For one was wise and one was fair,
But one was mine.

SONNET

There are strange shadows fostered of the moon,
More numerous than the clear-cut shade of day. . . .
Go forth, when all the leaves whisper of June,
Into the dusk of swooping bats at play;
Or go into that late November dusk
When hills take on the noble lines of death,
And on the air the faint, astringent musk
Of rotting leaves pours vaguely troubling breath.

Then shall you see shadows whereof the sun,
Knows nothing—aye, a thousand shadows there
Shall leap and flicker and stir and stay and run,
Like petrels of the changing foul or fair;
Like ghosts of twilight, of the moon, of him
Whose homeland lies past each horizon's rim.

LEAF-MOVEMENT

From its thin branch high in the autumn wind
The yellow leaf now sails in upward flight;
Hovers at top-slope; then, a whirling bright
Eddy of motion, sinks. The storm behind
With gusts and veering tyrannies would uphold
Even as it downward beats this gorgeous thing
Which like an angel's lost and shattered wing
Against the grey sky sweeps its broken gold.
Another eddy, desperate or in mirth,
Brings it to rest here on the crackled earth
Where men can see it better than on the bough.
What quite preposterous irony of wind's-will
Touches it where it lies, golden and still,
And once more lifts it vainly heavenward now!

Badger Clark

Badger Clark was born at Albia, Iowa, in 1883. He moved to Dakota Territory at the age of three months and now lives in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Clark is one of the few men who have lived to see their work become part of folk-lore, many of his songs having been adapted and paraphrased by the cowboys who have made them their own. A version of one of his poems ("The Glory Trail"), after wide circulation among the ranchers and cowpunchers, was printed as an example of anonymous folk-song in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* under the title "High-Chin Bob"—and credited to "Author

Unknown." Lomax's collection of cowboy songs has this interesting "anonymous" variant.

Sun and Saddle Leather (1915) and *Grass-Grown Trails* (1917) are the expression of a native singer; happy, spontaneous and seldom "literary." There is wind in these songs; the smell of camp-smoke and the colors of prairie sunsets rise from them. Free, for the most part, from affectations, Clark achieves an unusual ease in his use of the local vernacular.

THE GLORY TRAIL[1]

'Way high up the Mogollons,[2]
  Among the mountain tops,
A lion cleaned a yearlin's bones
  And licked his thankful chops,
When on the picture who should ride,
  A-trippin' down a slope,
But High-Chin Bob, with sinful pride
  And mav'rick-hungry rope.

"Oh, glory be to me," says he,
"And fame's unfadin' flowers!
All meddlin' hands are far away;
I ride my good top-hawse to-day
And I'm top-rope of the Lazy J—
Hi! kitty cat, you're ours!"

That lion licked his paw so brown
  And dreamed soft dreams of veal—
And then the circlin' loop sung down
  And roped him 'round his meal.
He yowled quick fury to the world
  Till all the hills yelled back;
The top-hawse gave a snort and whirled
  And Bob caught up the slack.

[1] From *Sun and Saddle Leather* by Badger Clark. Copyright, 1915. Richard G. Badger, Publisher.

[2] Pronounced Mokiónes, with the accent on the last syllable.

"Oh, glory be to me," laughs he.
"We've hit the glory trail.
No human man as I have read
Darst loop a ragin' lion's head,
Nor ever hawse could drag one dead
Until we told the tale."

'Way high up the Mogollons
That top-hawse done his best,
Through whippin' brush and rattlin' stones,
From canyon-floor to crest.
But ever when Bob turned and hoped
A limp remains to find,
A red-eyed lion, belly roped
But healthy, loped behind.

"Oh, glory be to me," grunts he.
"This glory trail is rough,
Yet even till the Judgment Morn
I'll keep this dally 'round the horn
For never any hero born
Could stoop to holler: 'Nuff!'"

Three suns had rode their circle home
Beyond the desert's rim,
And turned their star-herds loose to roam
The ranges high and dim;
Yet up and down and 'round and 'cross
Bob pounded, weak and wan,
For pride still glued him to his hawse
And glory drove him on.

"Oh, glory be to me," sighs he.
"He kaint be drug to death,
But now I know beyond a doubt
Them heroes I have read about
Was only fools that stuck it out
To end of mortal breath."

'Way high up the Mogollons
A prospect man did swear
That moon dreams melted down his bones
And hoisted up his hair:
A ribby cow-hawse thundered by,
A lion trailed along,
A rider, ga'nt but chin on high,
Yelled out a crazy song:

"Oh, glory be to me!" cries he,
"And to my noble noose!
Oh, stranger, tell my pards below
I took a rampin' dream in tow,
And if I never lay him low,
I'll never turn him loose!"

THE COYOTE[1]

Trailing the last gleam after,
In the valleys emptied of light,
Ripples a whimsical laughter
Under the wings of the night,
Mocking the faded west airily,
Meeting the little bats merrily,
Over the mesas it shrills
To the red moon on the hills.

Mournfully rising and waning,
Far through the moon-silvered land
Wails a weird voice of complaining
Over the thorns and the sand.
Out of blue silences eerily,
On to the black mountains wearily,
Till the dim desert is crossed,
Wanders the cry, and is lost.

[1] From *Grass-Grown Trails* by Badger Clark. Copyright, 1917. Richard G. Badger, Publisher.

Here by the fire's ruddy streamers,
  Tired with our hopes and our fears,
We inarticulate dreamers
  Hark to the song of our years.
Up to the brooding divinity
Far in that sparkling infinity
  Cry our despair and delight,
  Voice of the Western night!

Harry Kemp

Harry (Hibbard) Kemp, known as "the tramp-poet," was born in Youngstown, Ohio, December 15, 1883. He came East at the age of twelve, left school to enter a factory, but returned to high school to study English.

A globe-trotter by nature, he went to sea before finishing his high school course. He shipped first to Australia, then to China, from China to California, from California to the University of Kansas. After a few months in London in 1909 (he crossed the Atlantic as a stowaway) he returned to New York City, where he has lived ever since, founding his own theatre in which he is actor, stage-manager, playwright and chorus.

Kemp's first book was a play, *Judas* (1910), a reversion of the Biblical figure along the lines of Paul Heyse's *Mary of Magdala.* His first collection of poems, *The Cry of Youth* (1914), like the subsequent volume, *The Passing God* (1919), is full of every kind of poetry except the kind one might imagine Kemp would write. Instead of crude and boisterous verse, here is a precise and almost overpolished poetry. Kemp has, strangely enough, taken the classic formalists for his models—one can even detect timid whispers of Pope and Dryden among his lines.

Chanteys and Ballads (1920) is riper and more representative. The notes are more varied, the sense of personality is more pronounced; the lyrics have a particular delicacy of execution.

Tramping on Life (1922) is an autobiographical narrative, especially ingratiating in its presentation of Kemp's childhood. *The Love Rogue* (1923) is an adaptation from the Spanish of Tirso de Molina, a drama that Kemp insists is "the original Don Juan play."

STREET LAMPS

Softly they take their being, one by one,
From the lamp-lighter's hand, after the sun
Has dropped to dusk . . . like little flowers they bloom
Set in long rows amid the growing gloom.

Who he who lights them is, I do not know,
Except that, every eve, with footfall slow
And regular, he passes by my room
And sets his gusty flowers of light a-bloom.

A PHANTASY OF HEAVEN

Perhaps he plays with cherubs now,
  Those little, golden boys of God,
Bending, with them, some silver bough,
  The while a seraph, head a-nod,

Slumbers on guard; how they will run
  And shout, if he should wake too soon,—
As fruit more golden than the sun
  And riper than the full-grown moon,

Conglobed in clusters, weighs them down,
  Like Atlas heaped with starry signs;
And, if they're tripped, heel over crown,
  By hidden coils of mighty vines,—

Perhaps the seraph, swift to pounce,
  Will hale them, vexed, to God—and He
Will only laugh, remembering, once
  He was a boy in Galilee!

CAPE'S END

There is battle here, there is clean and vigorous war,
There are bivouacs visited by night's every star,
There are long, barren slopes of encampment burned clean
by the sun,
And ramparts of strange new dreams to be stormed and won.
Here the five-petalled wild rose blossoms more sweet
Because the earth is barren and the heat
Intolerable for lush, domestic grass;
The ocean shines like many disks of brass,
Or between white hollows it lapses, great and green
Where solitude sifts slowly in between
The hills of sparkling waste and rise and fall—
Hills whose one music is the sea bird's call! . . .
And here is all space that ever eye can see:
The ocean completing all immensity,
And the sky, mother of infinity—
Yet greatness on smallness jostles till both are one
And a grain of sand stands doorkeeper to the sun.

Max Eastman

Max Eastman was born in Canandaigua, New York, January 4, 1883. Both his father and mother had been Congregationalist preachers, so it was natural that the son should turn from scholasticism to a definitely social expression. Eastman received his A.B. at Williams in 1905; from 1907 to 1911 he was Associate in Philosophy at Columbia University. But in the latter part of 1911, he devoted all his time to writing, studying the problems of economic inequality and voicing the protests of the dumb millions in a style that was all the firmer for being philosophic. In 1913, he became editor of *The Masses* which, in 1917, changed its name to *The Liberator.*

Child of the Amazons (1913) reveals the quiet lover of beauty as well as the fiery hater of injustice. The best of these poems, with many new ones, were incorporated in *Colors of Life* (1918).

Besides Eastman's poems and essays, he has written one of the most clarifying—and most readable—studies of the period. *Enjoyment of Poetry* (1913) is invaluable as a new kind of text-book, the chief purpose of which, in the words of its preface, is to increase enjoyment. Eliminating the usual academic and literary classifications, Eastman accomplishes his object, which is to show that the poetic in everyday perception and conversation should not be separated from the poetic in literature. *The Sense of Humor,* a companion volume of analysis, appeared in 1921.

COMING TO PORT

Our motion on the soft still misty river
Is like rest; and like the hours of doom
That rise and follow one another ever,
Ghosts of sleeping battle-cruisers loom
And languish quickly in the liquid gloom.

From watching them your eyes in tears are gleaming,
And your heart is still; and like a sound
In silence is your stillness in the streaming
Of light-whispered laughter all around,
Where happy passengers are homeward bound.

Their sunny journey is in safety ending,
But for you no journey has an end.
The tears that to your eyes their light are lending
Shine in softness to no waiting friend;
Beyond the search of any eye they tend.

There is no nest for the unresting fever
Of your passion, yearning, hungry-veined;
There is no rest nor blessedness forever
That can clasp you, quivering and pained,
Whose eyes burn ever to the Unattained.

Like time, and like the river's fateful flowing,
Flowing though the ship has come to rest,
Your love is passing through the mist and going,
Going infinitely from your breast,
Surpassing time on its immortal quest.

The ship draws softly to the place of waiting,
All flush forward with a joyful aim,
And while their hands with happy hands are mating,
And lips are laughing out a happy name—
You pause, and pass among them like a flame.

AT THE AQUARIUM

Serene the silver fishes glide,
Stern-lipped, and pale, and wonder-eyed!
As, through the aged deeps of ocean,
They glide with wan and wavy motion.
They have no pathway where they go,
They flow like water to and fro,
They watch with never-winking eyes,
They watch with staring, cold surprise,
The level people in the air,
The people peering, peering there:
Who wander also to and fro,
And know not why or where they go,
Yet have a wonder in their eyes,
Sometimes a pale and cold surprise.

Wallace Stevens

Wallace Stevens, of Hartford, Connecticut, is a poet of peculiar reticences. His attitude to his work is, in itself, significant. Although most of it appeared in the two best known poetry magazines of the period, *Others* and *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse,* as

early as 1913, it was not until ten years later that Stevens' first volume, *Harmonium* (1923), appeared.

The most casual reading of this volume discloses the fact that Stevens is a stylist of unusual delicacy. Even the least sympathetic reader must be struck by the poet's hypersensitive and ingenious imagination. It is a curiously ambiguous world which Stevens paints: a world of merging half-lights, of finicking shadows, of disembodied emotions. Even this last phrase is an exaggeration, for emotion itself seems absent from the most brightly colored of the poet's designs. As Llewellyn Powys has written, "Mr. Stevens' poetry is beyond good and evil, beyond hope and despair, beyond thought of any kind, one might almost say."

Considered as a painter, Stevens is one of the most original impressionists of the times. He is fond of little blocks of sheer color, verbal mosaics in which syllables are used as pigments. Little related to any human struggle, the content of *Harmonium* progresses toward a sort of "absolute" poetry which, depending on tone and color rather than on passion, aims to flower in an air of pure æstheticism. His very titles—which deliberately add to the reader's confusion by having little or no connection with most of the poems—betray this quality: "Hymn from a Watermelon Pavilion," "The Emperor of Ice Cream," "The Paltry Nude Starts on a Spring Voyage," "Frogs Eat Butterflies, Snakes Eat Frogs, Hogs Eat Snakes, Men Eat Hogs." Such poems have much for the eye, something for the ear but little indeed for that central hunger which is at the heart of all the senses.

But, although Stevens displays an almost childish love of alliteration and assonance, he strikes out many vivid phrases. It is true that what Stevens spreads before us is often less like a canvas and more like a color palette. But his exotically splashed lines are alert with witty precisions. "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" has a delicacy of design which suggests the Chinese; "Peter Quince at the Clavier" and "To the One of Fictive Music" (Stevens' most obviously musical moment) reveal an elegance which places "this auditor of insects, this lutanist of fleas" as one who has perfected a kind of poetry which is, for all its limitations, a strangely fastidious and hermetic art.

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER [1]

I

Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music, too.

Music is feeling, then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna:

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders, watching, felt

The basses of their beings throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

II

In the green water, clear and warm,
Susanna lay,
She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed,
For so much melody.

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 259.

Upon the bank, she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering.

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.
She turned—
A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns.

III

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side;

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.

Anon, their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.

And then, the simpering Byzantines
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

IV

Beauty is momentary in the mind—
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.

The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
So evenings die, in their green going,
A wave, interminably flowing.
So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
The cowl of Winter, done repenting.
So maidens die, to the auroral
Celebration of a maiden's choral.

Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
Of those white elders; but, escaping,
Left only Death's ironic scraping.
Now, in its immortality, it plays
On the clear viol of her memory,
And makes a constant sacrament of praise.

TO THE ONE OF FICTIVE MUSIC

Sister and mother and diviner love,
And of the sisterhood of the living dead
Most near, most clear, and of the clearest bloom,
And of the fragrant mothers the most dear
And queen, and of diviner love the day
And flame and summer and sweet fire, no thread
Of cloudy silver sprinkles in your gown
Its venom of renown, and on your head
No crown is simpler than the simple hair.

Now, of the music summoned by the birth
That separates us from the wind and sea,
Yet leaves us in them, until earth becomes,

By being so much of the things we are,
Gross effigy and simulacrum, none
Gives motion to perfection more serene
Than yours, out of our imperfections wrought,
Most rare, or ever of more kindred air
In the laborious weaving that you wear.

For so retentive of themselves are men
That music is intensest which proclaims
The near, the clear, and vaunts the clearest bloom,
And of all vigils musing the obscure,
That apprehends the most which sees and names,
As in your name, an image that is sure,
Among the arrant spices of the sun,
O bough and bush and scented vine, in whom
We give ourselves our likest issuance.

Yet not too like, yet not so like to be
Too near, too clear, saving a little to endow
Our feigning with the strange unlike, whence springs
The difference that heavenly pity brings.
For this, musician, in your girdle fixed
Bear other perfumes. On your pale head wear
A band entwining, set with fatal stones.
Unreal, give back to us what once you gave:
The imagination that we spurned and crave.

William Carlos Williams

William Carlos Williams was born in Rutherford, New Jersey, September 17, 1883, the son of Raquel Ellen Rose Hoheb, born at Mayaguez, Porto Rico, and William George Williams, born in Birmingham, England. Williams was educated at Horace Mann High School, New York, at Geneva, Switzerland, and graduated in medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in 1906. After studying abroad, he returned in 1910 and took up his practise in Rutherford where he has lived ever since.

As Williams is of mixed Dutch, Jewish and Basque extraction, some of his friends have affected to find these mingled strains in much of his curiously exotic work. Be this as it may, Williams is one of the most interesting of the left wing of poetic expressionists. His first volume, *The Tempers,* was published in London in 1913, a tiny four-inch book which reveals nothing more unusual than youthful uncertainty. *Al Que Quiere* (1917) strikes a more decisive experimental note. From the mocking directions for a funeral which Williams has entitled "Tract" to the more extended "History," Williams achieves an extraordinary, purposely distorted intensification of figure. In *Kora in Hell* (1921) and *Sour Grapes* (1922) Williams seems to be wavering between actual experiment and the mere exhibition of eccentricities. On one page he paints the scrupulous arrangement of "Queen-Anne's-Lace"; on the next he offers, with cheerful indiscrimination, the flat absurdity of "Complete Destruction."

Although it is difficult to accept Williams in his uncritical entirety, it is ridiculous to reject him, as so many have done, in toto. Even his wildest records, even the uncontrolled stammerings of the unconscious in *Spring and All* (1923), have an æsthetic purpose as well as a spiritual strength. Those who have been quick to accuse Williams of charlatanry are those who have never ventured any farther than his disorganized moments and have not glimpsed the strong color and delicate movement of such poems as "Peace on Earth," "Metric Figure" and "Dawn."

METRIC FIGURE

There is a bird in the poplars—
It is the sun!
The leaves are little yellow fish
Swimming in the river;
The bird skims above them—
Day is on his wings.
Phœnix!
It is he that is making
The great gleam among the poplars.

It is his singing
Outshines the noise
Of leaves clashing in the wind.

PEACE ON EARTH

The Archer is wake!
The Swan is flying!
Gold against blue
An Arrow is lying.
There is hunting in heaven—
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Bears are abroad!
The Eagle is screaming!
Gold against blue
Their eyes are gleaming!
Sleep!
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Sisters lie
With their arms intertwining;
Gold against blue
Their hair is shining!
The Serpent writhes!
Orion is listening!
Gold against blue
His sword is glistening!
Sleep!
There is hunting in heaven—
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

DAWN

Ecstatic bird songs pound
the hollow vastness of the sky

with metallic clinkings—
beating color up into it
at a far edge,—beating it, beating it
with rising, triumphant ardor,—
stirring it into warmth,
quickening in it a spreading change,—
bursting wildly against it as
dividing the horizon, a heavy sun
lifts himself—is lifted—
bit by bit above the edge
of things,—runs free at last
out into the open—! lumbering
glorified in full release upward—
songs cease.

POEM

By the road to the contagious hospital,
under the surge of the blue
mottled clouds driven from the
northeast—cold wind. Beyond, the
waste of broad, muddy fields,
brown with dried weeds, standing and fallen,

patches of standing water,
the scattering of tall trees.

All along the road the reddish,
purplish, forked, upstanding, twiggy
stuff of brushes and small trees
with dead, brown leaves under them
leafless vines—

Lifeless in appearance, sluggish,
dazed spring approaches—

They enter the new world naked,
cold, uncertain of all
save that they enter. All about them
the cold, familiar wind—

Now the grass, to-morrow
the stiff curl of wild-carrot leaf.

One by one objects are defined—
It quickens: clarity, outline of leaf,

But now the stark dignity of
entrance— Still, the profound change
has come upon them; rooted, they
grip down and begin to awaken.

Alfred Kreymborg

Alfred Kreymborg, one of the most original of the insurgents, was born in New York City, December 10, 1883. His education was spasmodic, his childhood being spent beneath the roar of the elevated trains. At ten he was an expert chess player, devoting practically all his time to a study of the game. Later, he became a bookkeeper and demonstrator of mechanical player-pianos, but from the age of seventeen to twenty-five he supported himself by teaching chess and playing exhibition games. His passion, however, was not mathematics but music. He dreamed of extending the borders of poetry into the realms of tonic art, experimented with new systems of notation, technicalities of rhythm. At thirty, he began to turn to the theater as a medium, finding, in this way, fresh contacts that enriched and ripened his later work.

In 1914, he organized that group of radical poets which, half-deprecatingly, half-defiantly, called itself "Others." (He edited the three anthologies of their work published in 1916, 1917 and 1919). Meanwhile, he had been working on a technique that was a fresh attempt to rid poetry of its too frequent wordiness and rhetorical non-essentials. *Mushrooms* (1916) was the first collection in this vein. Here Kreymborg continually sought for simplifi-

cation, cutting away at his lines until they assumed an almost naked expression. Often he overdid his effects, attaining nothing more than a false ingenuousness, a sophisticated simplicity. Often, too, he failed to draw the line between what is innocently childlike and what is merely childish. One sees him frequently trying to strike curious attitudes, tripping over several of his experiments and sprawling ingloriously.

But Kreymborg, for all harlequin gestures, can do something better than tumble and talk with his tongue in his cheek. An acrobatic fantasy and no little beauty of thought are his when he wants to use them. Surprising whimsicality and passages of bright color distinguish his *Plays for Poem-Mimes* (1918), in which the principles of modern art are applied to poetry and acting, as well as the more developed *Plays for Merry Andrews* (1920).

Kreymborg's *Blood of Things* (1920) is, for all the surface oddities, the work not only of an apt conjurer but a serious thinker. Humor is in these pages, but it is humor lifted to a sort of exaltation. Here, in spite of what seems a persistence of occasional charlatanry, is a rich and sensitive imagination; a fancy that is as wild as it is quick-witted.

Puppet Plays, with a preface by Gordon Craig, appeared in 1923. Although in its predetermination to preserve an open-eyed wonder, Kreymborg's marionette-like emotions are often too doll-charming or too doll-tragic, these miniature dramas are appealing and witty. However, nothing which Kreymborg had written up to this time had prepared his readers for the volume which appeared a few months later. *Less Lonely* (1923) is not merely Kreymborg's most diverse volume, it is a new Kreymborg. A portion of it is in the idiom which the poet has made his own, but the greater part of the volume is in the shape of conventional verse—the actual form, that is, is conventional although Kreymborg's turn of thought is always individual. Besides the surprisingly lovely quatrains scattered through the three sections, there are couplets that display a delicately personal touch; there are even thirty orthodox sonnets! Since the publication of *Less Lonely,* Kreymborg has been working almost entirely in rhyme, achieving fresh effects in essentially simple patterns.

Besides his poetry, Kreymborg is guilty of several premature novels and, during the intervals between the founding of various experimental magazines, prose sketches. *Troubadour* (1925) is

his altogether winning autobiography. With the exception of the last few sections which degenerate into mere lists of names and places, this is an intimate and generous record of an artist's quest to establish himself in the midst of a commercial civilization. Direct and unaffected, *Troubadour,* with its excellent pictures of Greenwich Village during the Nineties, reveals Kreymborg no less fully than does his verse.

OLD MANUSCRIPT

The sky
is that beautiful old parchment
in which the sun
and the moon
keep their diary.
To read it all,
one must be a linguist
more learned than Father Wisdom;
and a visionary
more clairvoyant than Mother Dream.
But to feel it,
one must be an apostle:
one who is more than intimate
in having been, always,
the only confidant—
like the earth
or the sea.

DAWNS

I have come
from pride
all the way up to humility
This day-to-night.
The hill
was more terrible

than ever before.
This is the top;
there is the tall, slim tree
It isn't bent; it doesn't lean;
It is only looking back.
At dawn,
under that tree,
still another me of mine
was buried.
Waiting for me to come again,
humorously solicitous
of what I bring next,
it looks down.

IMPROVISATION

Wind:
Why do you play
that long beautiful adagio,
that archaic air,
to-night.
Will it never end?
Or is it the beginning,
some prelude you seek?

Is it a tale you strum?
Yesterday, yesterday—
Have you no more for us?

Wind:
Play on.
There is nor hope
nor mutiny
in you.

ADVERTISEMENT

We want a man of forty for the job.
One who has enjoyed his little fill of romance.
And suffered intermittent indigestion ever since.
One whose memories are sufficiently cold
  successfully to resist the embraces of truancy.
To whom a mountain
  no longer looms an ideal
  to scramble up and tumble down,
  but is an actual thing made of stone
  bristling with multitudinous edges
  to bark one's shins or break one's neck upon.
To whom a lake or river
  or other body of water
  no longer entices the search for one's likeness
  (we only ask a man to be himself
  and not go diving after phantoms),
  but is a place one might readily drown in,
  one's muscles no longer quite what they were.
Who has achieved
  that ultimate disillusionment:
  not to be able to differentiate
  the respective features, limbs or what not
  of his whilom Graces and Gwendolyns,
  and if he could wouldn't want to,
  would devote the rest of his days to a desk
  piled sky-high with ledgers and cash-books:
Such a man would be certain to stick.
We want such a man for the job.

PEASANT

It's the mixture of peasantry
  makes him so slow.

He waggles his head
before he speaks,
like a cow
before she crops.
He bends to the habit
of dragging his feet
up under him,
like a measuring-worm:
some of his forefathers,
stooped over books,
ruled short straight lines
under two rows of figures
to keep their thin savings
from sifting to the floor.
Should you strike him
with a question,
he will blink twice or thrice
and roll his head about,
like an owl
in the pin-pricks
of a dawn he cannot see.
There is mighty little flesh
about his bones,
there is no gusto
in his stride:
he seems to wait
for the blow on the buttocks
that will drive him
another step forward—
step forward to what?
There is no land,
no house,
no barn,
he has ever owned;
he sits uncomfortable
on chairs
you might invite him to:

if you did,
he'd keep his hat in hand
against the moment
when some silent pause
for which he hearkens
with his ear to one side
bids him move on—
move on where?
It doesn't matter.
He has learned
to shrug his shoulders,
so he'll shrug his shoulders now:
caterpillars do it
when they're halted by a stick.
Is there a sky overhead?—
a hope worth flying to?—
Birds may know about it,
but it's birds
that birds descend from.

PEEWEE

Is it a wish—that tiny tin whistle
Out on a leafless branch throwing a missile,

Wrapped in a dip and a lift, like a bow
Of rain turned somersault, curve down below:

Tip-dip-tipping a phrase and a blow,
Releasing a flute in a piccolo,

And striking an ear with a short, thin dart,
Pinning a secret one hides in a heart?

If it isn't a wish, why does it tarry?
If it wasn't fulfilled, how far did it carry?

Was it too stunted to be sentimental?
Or much too local to be continental?

CROCUS

When trees have lost remembrance of the leaves
that spring bequeathes to summer, autumn weaves
and loosens mournfully—this dirge, to whom
does it belong—who treads the hidden loom?

When peaks are overwhelmed with snow and ice,
and clouds with crêpe bedeck and shroud the skies—
nor any sun or moon or star, it seems,
can wedge a path of light through such black dreams—

All motion cold, and dead all trace thereof:
What sudden shock below, or spark above,
starts torrents raging down till rivers surge—
that aid the first small crocus to emerge?

The earth will turn and spin and fairly soar,
that couldn't move a tortoise-foot before—
and planets permeate the atmosphere
till misery depart and mystery clear!—

And yet, so insignificant a hearse?—
who gave it the endurance so to brave
such elements?—shove winter down a grave?—
and then lead on again the universe?

Donald Evans

Donald Evans was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 24, 1884, and was educated at Haverford College. With the exception of a few years, the rest of his life was spent in journalism: he was the assistant editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* from 1905 to

1912, was on the staff of *The New York Times* from 1912 to 1915 and, returning to Philadelphia the same year, resumed his connection with his former paper from 1915 until two years before his death.

Evans was one of those who brought, albeit tardily, the spirit as well as the decadence of the 1890's to America. He was, with Allan Norton, one of the instigators of *Rogue,* that brightly impertinent magazine which flourished its gay banner for a short time in Greenwich Village before that locality became commercialized as a "sight" for midwestern tourists. His first volume, *Discords* (1912), attracted little attention although it contained several vivid monologues. It was with his second book that the curious chameleon quality of Evans' work was revealed. *Sonnets from the Patagonian* (1914) created a small sensation in circles much wider than the sophisticated group which it portrayed. In ironically twisted phrases and unusual word-associations (anticipating Maxwell Bodenheim's later innovations) he filled the classic fourteen lines with a wild sort of futurism. His critics denounced him as an insincere poseur, a salacious charlatan, a morbid apostle of perverse literature. Today these judgments seem as absurd as they are extravagant. Evans was merely—especially in this volume—an ingenious cynic with a neat gift of somewhat startling epigram. His *Two Deaths in the Bronx* (1916) also discloses his highly elaborate artificiality, but there is a certain warmth beneath the glittering surfaces. "It is," according to a pamphlet by one "Cornwall Hollis," a pamphlet either written or inspired by Evans himself, "impossible to read these deliberately perverse poems and not realize that the poet, for some reason best known to himself, is hiding some deep and tragic human emotion behind a mask of incessant gayety."

Nine Poems from a Valetudinarian must have been a surprise to Evans' former admirers, for here the attitudinist becomes unaffected, the coiner of feverish phrases is almost simple. There are notes of actual gravity in this volume, even a humility which finds a still deeper expression in Evans' last volume, *Ironica,* published in 1919.

From the evidence presented in his later work, it seems likely that Evans was at the turning point of his career; the unquestioned skill of his early verse was being lifted by a new sensibility. Evans died May 26, 1921.

IN THE VICES

Gay and audacious crime glints in his eyes;
And his mad talk, raping the commonplace,
Gleefully runs a devil-praising race,
And none can ever follow where he flies.
He streaks himself with vices tenderly;
He cradles sin, and with a figleaf fan
Taps his green cat, watching a bored sun span
The wasted minutes to eternity.

Once I took up his trail along the dark,
Wishful to track him to the witches' flame,
To see the bubbling of the sneer and snare.
The way led through a fragrant starlit park.
And soon upon a harlot's house I came—
Within I found him playing solitaire!

THE TOWER

Is the silence ended
In the tower?
Have the bells been mended
By strange power?

Will they ring out clearly
As of yore?
Will they rhyme sincerely
As before?

Since the bronze was broken
It has seemed
I have never spoken,
Only dreamed.

SILVER WEDDING

The marriage vows still hold. Love grows not less.
  Hymen has triumphed. We are closely bound,
  And find in compromise a meeting-ground.
We have no vulgar difference to confess.
But of the golden coins our souls possess
  We squander every penny in the pound
  To buy this stagnant peace that wraps us round,
And fills our days with mordant emptiness.

This is the tasteless meat and acid wine,
  Wherewith we celebrate the passing years,
  While grief sits guest with a few dried-up tears.
O where are all the dreams of large design?
  There were so many,—and we worked out none.
  We had but this one life—and it is gone.

Arturo Giovannitti

Arturo Giovannitti was born in Abruzzi, Italy, January 7, 1884. He studied at the college of his native province and came to New York when he was eighteen years old. Even as a child Giovannitti had dreamed of America and had "learned upon the knees of his mother and father to reverence, with tears in his eyes, the name of the republic." With the dream of America as the great liberator in his heart, his first impressions were shattering. What he saw, through the eyes of the laborer, was the whiplash and legal trickery, the few ruling the many, the miseries and exploitation of the helpless. He thought of becoming a preacher, attended theological school; sought a greater outlet for his passion for democracy and became an editor; lectured, wrote pamphlets and worked continually to express "a multitude of men lost in an immensity of silence."

Although Giovannitti has written several books in Italian, his one English volume is *Arrows in the Gale* (1914). In an elo-

quent introduction to the poet's rough music and rougher mixture of realism and rapture, Helen Keller writes, "He makes us feel the presence of toilers behind tenement walls, behind the machinery they guide. . . . He finds voice for his message in the sighs, the dumb hopes, the agonies and thwartings of men who are bowed and broken by the monster hands of machines."

Several of Giovannitti's poems are in rhyme, but his most characteristic lines move in uplifted prose poems that shape themselves vividly to their subjects. "The Cage," with its restrained anger, and "The Walker" are typical. "The Walker," unfortunately too long to quote in its entirety, is remarkable, not only as an artwork, but as a document; it is a twentieth-century "Ballad of Reading Gaol," with an intensity and mystical power of which Wilde was incapable.

FROM "THE WALKER"

I hear footsteps over my head all night.

They come and they go. Again they come and they go all night.

They come one eternity in four paces and they go one eternity in four paces, and between the coming and the going there is Silence and the Night and the Infinite.

For infinite are the nine feet of a prison cell, and endless is the march of him who walks between the yellow brick wall and the red iron gate, thinking things that cannot be chained and cannot be locked, but that wander far away in the sunlit world, each in a wild pilgrimage after a destined goal.

. . . . . .

Throughout the restless night I hear the footsteps over my head.

Who walks? I know not. It is the phantom of the jail, the sleepless brain, a man, the man, the Walker.

One-two-three-four: four paces and the wall.

One-two-three-four: four paces and the iron gate.

He has measured his space, he has measured it accurately,

scrupulously, minutely, as the hangman measures the rope and the gravedigger the coffin—so many feet, so many inches, so many fractions of an inch for each of the four paces.

One-two-three-four. Each step sounds heavy and hollow over my head, and the echo of each step sounds hollow within my head as I count them in suspense and in dread that once, perhaps, in the endless walk, there may be five steps instead of four between the yellow brick wall and the red iron gate.

But he has measured the space so accurately, so scrupulously, so minutely that nothing breaks the grave rhythm of the slow, fantastic march.

. . . . . .

All through the night he walks and he thinks.

Is it more frightful because he walks and his footsteps sound hollow over my head, or because he thinks and speaks not his thoughts?

But does he think? Why should he think? Do I think? I only hear the footsteps and count them. Four steps and the wall. Four steps and the gate. But beyond? Beyond? Where goes he beyond the gate and the wall?

He goes not beyond. His thought breaks there on the iron gate. Perhaps it breaks like a wave of rage, perhaps like a sudden flow of hope, but it always returns to beat the wall like a billow of helplessness and despair.

He walks to and fro within the narrow whirlpit of this ever storming and furious thought. Only one thought—constant, fixed, immovable, sinister, without power and without voice.

A thought of madness, frenzy, agony and despair, a hell-brewed thought, for it is a natural thought. All things natural are things impossible while there are jails in the world—bread, work, happiness, peace, love.

But he thinks not of this. As he walks he thinks of the most superhuman, the most unattainable, the most impossible thing in the world:

He thinks of a small brass key that turns just half around and throws open the red iron gate.

. . . . . .

That is all the Walker thinks, as he walks throughout the night.

And that is what two hundred minds drowned in the darkness and silence of the night think, and that is also what I think.

Wonderful is the supreme wisdom of the jail that makes all think the same thought. Marvelous is the providence of the law that equalizes all, even in mind and sentiment. Fallen is the last barrier of privilege, the aristocracy of the intellect. The democracy of reason has leveled all the two hundred minds to the common surface of the same thought.

I, who have never killed, think like the murderer;

I, who have never stolen, reason like the thief;

I think, reason, hope, doubt, wait like the hired assassin, the embezzler, the forger, the counterfeiter, the incestuous, the raper, the drunkard, the prostitute, the pimp—I, I who used to think of love and life and flowers and song and beauty and the ideal.

A little key, a little key as little as my little finger, a little key of shining brass.

All my ideas, my thoughts, my dreams are congealed in a little key of shiny brass.

. . . . . .

Eunice Tietjens

Eunice Tietjens (née Hammond) was born in Chicago, Illinois, July 29, 1884. She married Paul Tietjens, the composer, in 1904. During 1914 and 1916 she was Associate Editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* and went to France as war correspondent of the Chicago *Daily News* (1917-18). Her second marriage (to Cloyd Head, the writer) occurred in February, 1920.

Profiles from China (1917) is a series of sketches of people, scenes and incidents observed in the interior. Written in a fluent free verse, the poems in this collection are alive with color and personality. The succeeding *Body and Raiment* (1919) is less integrated, more derivative and diffuse. And yet, in spite of certain obvious echoes, individual poems like "The Drug Clerk," "The Steam Shovel" and a few others are worthy to stand beside her distinguished first volume.

Profiles from Home (1925) attempts to do for the United States what Mrs. Tietjens' first volume did for China. It is, unfortunately, as disappointing as its predecessor was distinguished. *Profiles from Home* contains a few interesting sardonic commentaries; as poetry it is dull, never rising above a flat and pedestrian level.

THE MOST-SACRED MOUNTAIN

Space, and the twelve clean winds of heaven,
And this sharp exultation, like a cry, after the slow six thousand steps of climbing!
This is Tai Shan, the beautiful, the most holy.

Below my feet the foot-hills nestle, brown with flecks of green; and lower down the flat brown plain, the floor of earth, stretches away to blue infinity.
Beside me in this airy space the temple roofs cut their slow curves against the sky,
And one black bird circles above the void.

Space, and the twelve clean winds are here;
And with them broods eternity—a swift, white peace, a presence manifest.
The rhythm ceases here. Time has no place. This is the end that has no end.

Here when Confucius came, a half a thousand years before the Nazarene, he stepped, with me, thus into timelessness.

The stone beside us waxes old, the carven stone that says:
On this spot once Confucius stood and felt the smallness of the world below.

The stone grows old.
Eternity
Is not for stones.
But I shall go down from this airy space, this swift white peace, this stinging exultation;
And time will close about me, and my soul stir to the rhythm of the daily round.
Yet, having known, life will not press so close,
And always I shall feel time ravel thin about me.
For once I stood
In the white windy presence of eternity.

THE DRUG CLERK

The drug clerk stands behind the counter
Young and dapper and debonair. . . .

Before him burn the great unwinking lights,
The hectic stars of city nights,
Red as hell's pit, green as a mermaid's hair.
A queer half-acrid smell is in the air.
Behind him on the shelves in ordered rows
With strange, abbreviated names
Dwell half the facts of life. That young man knows
Bottled and boxed and powdered here,
Dumb tragedies, deceptions, secret shames,
And comedy and fear.

Sleep slumbers here, like a great quiet sea
Shrunk to this bottle's compass; sleep that brings
Sweet respite from the teeth of pain
To those poor tossing things

That the white nurses watch so thoughtfully.
And here again
Dwell the shy souls of Maytime flowers
That shall make sweeter still those poignant hours
When wide-eyed youth looks on the face of love.
And, for those others who have found too late
The bitter fruits thereof,
Here are cosmetics, powders, paints,—the arts
That hunted women use to hunt again
With scented flesh for bait.
And here is comfort for the hearts
Of sucking babes in their first teething pain.
Here dwells the substance of huge fervid dreams,
Fantastic, many-colored, shot with gleams
Of ecstasy and madness, that shall come
To some pale, twitching sleeper in a bunk.
And here is courage, cheaply bought
To cure a blue sick funk,
And dearly paid for in the final sum.
Here in this powdered fly is caught
Desire more ravishing than Tarquin's rape
And bloody-handed murder. And at last
When the one weary hope is past
Here is the sole escape,
The little postern in the house of breath
Where pallid fugitives keep tryst with death.

All this the drug clerk knows and there he stands,
Young and dapper and debonair. . . .
He rests a pair of slender hands,
Much manicured, upon the counter there
And speaks: "No, we don't carry no pomade,
We only cater to the high-class trade."

Sara Teasdale was born August 8, 1884, in St. Louis, Missouri, and educated there. After leaving school she traveled in Europe and the Near East. In 1914 she married Ernst B. Filsinger, who has written several books on foreign trade, and moved to New York City in 1916.

Her first book was a slight volume, *Sonnets to Duse* (1907), giving little promise of the rich lyricism which was to follow. *Helen of Troy and Other Poems* (1911) contains the first hints of that delicate craftsmanship and authentic loveliness which this poet has brought to such a high pitch. The six monologues which open the volume are splendid delineations written in a blank verse that is as musical as many of her lyrics. At times it suffers from too conscious a cleverness; the dexterity with which Miss Teasdale turns a phrase or twists her last line is frequently too obtrusive to be wholly enjoyable.

Rivers to the Sea (1915) emphasizes this epigrammatic skill, but a greater restraint is here, a warmer spontaneity. The new collection contains at least a dozen unforgettable snatches, lyrics in which the words seem to fall into place without art or effort. Seldom employing metaphor or striking imagery, almost bare of ornament, these poems have the sheer magic of folk-song. Theirs is an artlessness that is something more than an art.

Love Songs (1917) is a collection of Miss Teasdale's previous melodies for the *viola d'amore* together with several new tunes. The new poems emphasize the way in which this poet achieves a direct enchantment without verbal subtleties. They also emphasize their superiority to the earlier love lyrics that were written in a mood of literary romance, of artificial moonlit roses, languishing lutes, balconies, passionate guitars—a mood that was less careless than cultivated.

Flame and Shadow (1920, Revised Edition, published in England in 1924) is by far the best of her books. Here the beauty is fuller and deeper; an almost mystic radiance plays from these verses. Technically, also, this volume marks Miss Teasdale's greatest advance. The words are chosen with a keener sense of their actual as well as their musical values; the rhythms are much more subtle and varied; the line moves with a greater naturalness. Beneath the symbolism of poems like "Water Lilies," "The Long Hill," and "Let It Be Forgotten," one is conscious of a finer artistry, a more

flexible speech that is all the lovelier for its slight (and logical) irregularities.

Since the publication of *Flame and Shadow* Miss Teasdale's singing has grown more thoughtful, even more sombre. It is a darker though by no means a less lovely music that moves under the surface rhythms of "Wisdom," "The Solitary," and "The Flight."

Besides her own books, Miss Teasdale has compiled an anthology, *The Answering Voice* (1917), comprising one hundred love lyrics by women, and a collection for children, *Rainbow Gold* (1922).

NIGHT SONG AT AMALFI [1]

I asked the heaven of stars
  What I should give my love—
It answered me with silence,
  Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea
  Down where the fishermen go—
It answered me with silence,
  Silence below.

Oh, I could give him weeping,
  Or I could give him song—
But how can I give silence
  My whole life long?

SPRING NIGHT [2]

The park is filled with night and fog,
  The veils are drawn about the world,
The drowsy lights along the paths
  Are dim and pearled.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Love Songs* by Sara Teasdale.

[2] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Rivers to the Sea* by Sara Teasdale.

Gold and gleaming the empty streets,
Gold and gleaming the misty lake,
The mirrored lights like sunken swords,
Glimmer and shake.

Oh, is it not enough to be
Here with this beauty over me?
My throat should ache with praise, and I
Should kneel in joy beneath the sky.
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love
With youth, a singing voice, and eyes
To take earth's wonder with surprise?
Why have I put off my pride,
Why am I unsatisfied,—
I, for whom the pensive night
Binds her cloudy hair with light,—
I, for whom all beauty burns
Like incense in a million urns?
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love?

I SHALL NOT CARE[1]

When I am dead and over me bright April
Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken-hearted,
I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
When rain bends down the bough;
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
Than you are now.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Love Songs* by Sara Teasdale.

THE LONG HILL[1]

I must have passed the crest a while ago
  And now I am going down—
Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know,
  But the brambles were always catching the hem of my gown.

All the morning I thought how proud I should be
  To stand there straight as a queen,
Wrapped in the wind and the sun with the world under me—
  But the air was dull, there was little I could have seen.

It was nearly level along the beaten track
  And the brambles caught in my gown—
But it's no use now to think of turning back,
  The rest of the way will be only going down.

WATER LILIES[1]

If you have forgotten water-lilies floating
  On a dark lake among mountains in the afternoon shade,
If you have forgotten their wet, sleepy fragrance,
  Then you can return and not be afraid.

But if you remember, then turn away forever
  To the plains and the prairies where pools are far apart,
There you will not come at dusk on closing water lilies,
  And the shadow of mountains will not fall on your heart.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Flame and Shadow* by Sara Teasdale.

"LET IT BE FORGOTTEN" [1]

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,
  Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,
  Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten
  Long and long ago,
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall
  In a long forgotten snow.

WISDOM

It was a night of early spring,
  The winter-sleep was scarcely broken;
Around us shadows and the wind
  Listened for what was never spoken.

Though half a score of years are gone,
  Spring comes as sharply now as then—
But if we had it all to do
  It would be done the same again.

It was a spring that never came;
  But we have lived enough to know
That what we never have, remains;
  It is the things we have that go.

THE SOLITARY

My heart has grown rich with the passing of years,
  I have less need now than when I was young
To share myself with every comer,
  Or shape my thoughts into words with my tongue.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Flame and Shadow* by Sara Teasdale.

It is one to me that they come or go
If I have myself and the drive of my will,
And strength to climb on a summer night
And watch the stars swarm over the hill.

Let them think I love them more than I do,
Let them think I care, though I go alone,
If it lifts their pride, what is it to me,
Who am self-complete as a flower or a stone?

ON THE SOUTH DOWNS

Over the downs there were birds flying,
Far off glittered the sea,
And toward the north the weald of Sussex
Lay like a kingdom under me.

I was happier than the larks
That nest on the downs and sing to the sky—
Over the downs the birds flying
Were not so happy as I.

It was not you, though you were near,
Though you were good to hear and see;
It was not earth, it was not heaven,
It was myself that sang in me.

THE FLIGHT

We are two eagles
Flying together,
Under the heavens,
Over the mountains,
Stretched on the wind.
Sunlight heartens us,
Blind snow baffles us,

Clouds wheel after us,
Ravelled and thinned.

We are like eagles;
But when Death harries us,
Human and humbled
When one of us goes,
Let the other follow—
Let the flight be ended,
Let the fire blacken,
Let the book close.

Margaret Widdemer

Margaret Widdemer was born in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and began writing in her childhood. After graduating from Drexel Institute Library School in 1909, she became a contributor of poems and short stories to various magazines—her first published poem ("The Factories") being widely quoted.

Miss Widdemer's poetic work has two distinct phases. In the one mood, she is the protesting poet, the champion of the downtrodden. In the other she is the writer of well-made, polite and popular sentimental verse. Her finest poems are in *Factories with Other Lyrics* (1915), although several of her best liked songs are in *The Old Road to Paradise* (1918), which divided, with Sandburg's *Cornhuskers,* the Columbia Poetry Prize in 1918, and *Ballads and Lyrics* (1925).

Miss Widdemer is also the author of two books of short stories, five novels and several books for girls.

FACTORIES

I have shut my little sister in from life and light
(For a rose, for a ribbon, for a wreath across my hair),
I have made her restless feet still until the night,
Locked from sweets of summer and from wild spring air;

I who ranged the meadowlands, free from sun to sun,
  Free to sing and pull the buds and watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my sister till her playing time was done—
  Oh, my little sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of her day of maidenhood
  (For a robe, for a feather, for a trinket's restless spark),
Shut from love till dusk shall fall, how shall she know good,
  How shall she go scatheless through the sun-lit dark?
I who could be innocent, I who could be gay,
  I who could have love and mirth before the light went by,
I have put my sister in her mating-time away—
  Sister, my young sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of the lips against her breast,
  (For a coin, for the weaving of my children's lace and lawn),
Feet that pace beside the loom, hands that cannot rest—
  How can she know motherhood, whose strength is gone?
I who took no heed of her, starved and labor-worn,
  I, against whose placid heart my sleepy gold-heads lie,
Round my path they cry to me, little souls unborn—
  God of Life! Creator! It was I! It was I!

THE MODERN WOMAN TO HER LOVER

I shall not lie to you any more,
  Flatter or fawn to attain my end—
I am what never has been before,
  Woman—and Friend.

I shall be strong as a man is strong,
  I shall be fair as a man is fair,
Hand in locked hand we shall pass along
  To a purer air:

I shall not drag at your bridle-rein,
Knee pressed to knee we shall ride the hill;
I shall not lie to you ever again—
Will you love me still?

DuBose Heyward

DuBose Heyward was born in Charleston, South Carolina, August 31, 1885, of English and French Huguenot stock. He was educated in his native State, and has lived there all of his life, spending part of the time in Charleston and the remainder in the North Carolina mountains.

His first volume, *Carolina Chansons,* was written in collaboration with Hervey Allen. It is a laudable as well as an unusual experiment, an effort to reproduce the haunted atmosphere of that part of the South which these two poets represent. *Skylines and Horizons* continues if it does not quite fulfil the promise of Heyward's first offering. Though it is less self-consciously autochthonous, it is no less redolent of the spirit of the South. The contents range from the misty evocations of the Low Country to the primitive strength of the cycle written in the Great Smokies, of which "A Yoke of Steers" is an illuminating example.

Besides his verse, Heyward has been working lately in prose, his first novel, *Porgy* (1925), being a picture as well as an interpretation of contemporary Negro life.

A YOKE OF STEERS [1]

A heave of mighty shoulders to the yoke,
Square, patient heads, and flaring sweep of horn;
The darkness swirling down beneath their feet
Where sleeping valleys stir, and feel the dawn;
Uncouth and primal, on and up they sway,
Taking the summit in a drench of day.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Skylines and Horizons,* copyright 1924, by DuBose Heyward.

The night-winds volley upward bitter-sweet,
And the dew shatters to a rainbow spray
Under the slow-moving, cloven feet.

There is a power here that grips the mind;
A force repressed and inarticulate,
Slow as the swing of centuries, as blind
As destiny, and as deliberate.

They will arrive in their appointed hour
Unhurried by the goad of lesser wills,
Bearing vast burdens on.
They are the great
Unconquerable spirit of these hills.

Gladys Cromwell

Gladys Cromwell was born November 28, 1885, in New York City. She was educated in New York private schools and lived abroad a great deal. "Her life," writes Anne Dunn, "was little indented by outer events, being wholly of the mind and spirit." She was most at home in the world within herself, sensitive and —to the final, tragic degree—self-effacing.

In January, 1918, Gladys and Dorothea, her twin-sister, enrolled in the Canteen Service of the Red Cross, sailed for France and were stationed at Châlons. Both girls worked unremittingly for eight months. It was only at the end of their desperate labors that they gave way to hopelessness, believing their efforts futile and the whole world desolate. Signs of a mental breakdown show in their diaries as early as October. "After the armistice," writes Anne Dunn in her biographical note which serves as an appreciative epilogue to Gladys Cromwell's *Poems,* "they showed symptoms of nervous prostration; but years of self-control and consideration for others made them conceal the black horror in which they lived, the agony through which they saw a world which, they felt, contained no refuge for beauty or quiet thought. And when, on their way home, they jumped from the deck of the *Lorraine* it

was in response to a vision that promised them fulfilment and peace." After their death, which occurred January 19, 1919, the French Government awarded the two sisters the Croix de Guerre.

Gates of Utterance (1915) has something more than the usual "promise." But the best of Miss Cromwell's work can be found in her posthumously published *Poems* (1919), which, in 1920, received the yearly prize offered by the Poetry Society of America, dividing the honor with Neihardt's *The Song of Three Friends.* Her most significant poems betray that attitude to life which was at the heart of her tragedy—a preoccupation that was a mixture of fascination and fear. Her lines, never mediocre, are introspective and fraught with serious concern. Several of her delicate songs, like the two lyrics quoted, tremble on the verge of greatness.

THE CROWNING GIFT [1]

I have had courage to accuse;
And a fine wit that could upbraid;
And a nice cunning that could bruise;
And a shrewd wisdom, unafraid
Of what weak mortals fear to lose.

I have had virtue to despise
The sophistry of pious fools;
I have had firmness to chastise;
And intellect to make me rules
To estimate and exorcise.

I have had knowledge to be true;
My faith could obstacles remove;
But now my frailty I endue.
I would have courage now to love,
And lay aside the strength I knew.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Poems* by Gladys Cromwell.

THE MOULD[1]

No doubt this active will,
So bravely steeped in sun,
This will has vanquished Death
And foiled oblivion.

But this indifferent clay,
This fine, experienced hand
So quiet, and these thoughts
That all unfinished stand,

Feel death as though it were
A shadowy caress;
And win and wear a frail
Archaic wistfulness.

Ezra Pound

Ezra (Loomis) Pound was born at Hailey, Idaho, October 30, 1885; attended Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania; and went abroad, seeking fresh material to complete a thesis on Lope de Vega, in 1908. After visiting Spain on a roundabout journey to England, where he took up his residence until his removal to Paris, Pound halted for a while in Italy. It was there, in Venice, to be precise, that Pound's first book, *A Lume Spento* (1908), was printed. The following year Pound went to London and the chief poems of the little volume were incorporated in *Personæ* (1909), a small collection containing some of Pound's finest work.

Although the young American was a total stranger to the English literary world, his book made a definite impression on critics of all shades and tastes. Edward Thomas, one of the most careful appraisers, wrote, "The beauty of it is the beauty of passion,

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Poems* by Gladys Cromwell.

sincerity and intensity, not of beautiful words and images and suggestions. . . . The thought dominates the words and is greater than they are." Another critic (Scott James) placed the chief emphasis on Pound's metrical innovations, saying, "At first the whole thing may seem to be mere madness and rhetoric, a vain exhibition of force and passion without beauty. But as we read on, these curious meters seem to have a law and order of their own."

Exultations (1909) was printed in the autumn of the same year that saw the appearance of *Personæ*. It was received with even greater cordiality; a new force and freedom were manifest in such poems as "Sestina: Altaforte," "Ballad of the Goodly Fere," and the stark "Ballad for Gloom."

In both of these books there was evident Pound's erudition—a familiarity with mediæval literature, Provençal singers, Troubadour ballads—that, later on, was to degenerate into pedantry and become hard and sterile. Too often in his later work Pound seems to be more the archæologist than the artist, digging with little energy and less enthusiasm. *Canzoni* (1911) and *Ripostes* (1912) contain much that is sharp and living; they also contain the germs of desiccation and decay. Pound began to scatter his talents; to start movements which he quickly discarded for new ones; to spend himself in poetic propaganda for the Imagists and others (see Preface); to give more and more time to translation (*The Sonnets of Guido Cavalcanti* appeared in 1912) and arrangements from the Chinese (*Cathay,* paraphrased from the notes of Ernest Fenollosa, was issued in 1915); to lay the chief stress on *technique,* shades of color, verbal *nuances.* The result was a lassitude of the creative faculties, an impoverishment of emotion. In the later books, Pound begins to suffer from a decadence which appraises the values in life chiefly as æsthetic values. And this decadence expresses itself in a weariness, an impotence of the imagination. Real feeling becomes rarer in his work and the poet descends to flashy trivialities, vagaries of assertion or sheer *bravado* of expression—wasting much of his gift in a mere tilting at convention.

But though this is true of a great quantity of his recent work, though he often seems a living anachronism, drawing life, not from life itself, but only from books, many of the poems in *Lustra* (1917) and *Poems 1918-1922* yield a hard brightness. The influence of

Browning and the pre-Raphaelites is less pronounced and reflections of his earlier energy stand out with a peculiar brilliance.

Too special to achieve permanence, too intellectual to become popular, Pound's contribution to his age should not be under-estimated. He was a pioneer in the new forms; he fought dullness wherever he encountered it; under his leadership the Imagists became not only a group but a protest. He helped to make many of the paths which a score of unconsciously influenced poets tread with such ease and nonchalance. Much of his poetry gesticulates instead of speaking, a great portion of his art is poetry in pantomime. And yet, without Pound, American poetry would scarcely have been the many-voiced, multi-colored thing that it is.

AN IMMORALITY

Sing we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing.

A VIRGINAL

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
For my surrounding air has a new lightness;
Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
And left me cloaked as with a gauze of aether;
As with sweet leaves; as with a subtle clearness.
Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.

No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavour,
Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
As winter's wound with her sleight hand she staunches,
Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour:
As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

BALLAD FOR GLOOM

For God, our God is a gallant foe
That playeth behind the veil.

I have loved my God as a child at heart
That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,
I have loved my God as a maid to man—
But lo, this thing is best:

To love your God as a gallant foe that plays behind the veil;
To meet your God as the night winds meet beyond Arcturus' pale.

I have played with God for a woman,
I have staked with my God for truth,
I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed—
His dice be not of ruth.

For I am made as a naked blade,
But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man
Shall win at the turn of the game.
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings meet
But the ending is the same:
Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose
Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God is a gallant foe that playeth behind the veil.
When God deigns not to overthrow hath need of triple mail.

A GIRL

The tree has entered my hands,
The sap has ascended my arms,
The tree has grown in my breast
Downward,
The branches grow out of me, like arms.

Tree you are,
Moss you are,
You are violets with wind above them.
A child—so high—you are;
And all this is folly to the world.

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

BALLAD OF THE GOODLY FERE[1]

(*Simon Zelotes speaketh it somewhile after the Crucifixion*)

Ha' we lost the goodliest fere o' all
For the priests and the gallows tree?
Aye, lover he was of brawny men,
O' ships and the open sea.

[1] Fere = Mate, Companion.

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see,
"First let these go!" quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Or I'll see ye damned," says he.

Aye, he sent us out through the crossed high spears,
And the scorn of his laugh rang free,
"Why took ye not me when I walked about
Alone in the town?" says he.

Oh we drank his "Hale" in the good red wine
When we last made company,
No capon priest was the Goodly Fere
But a man o' men was he.

I ha' seen him drive a hundred men
Wi' a bundle o' cords swung free,
When they took the high and holy house
For their pawn and treasury.

They'll no get him a' in a book I think
Though they write it cunningly;
No mouse of the scrolls was the Goodly Fere
But aye loved the open sea.

If they think they ha' snared our Goodly Fere
They are fools to the last degree.
"I'll go to the feast," quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Though I go to the gallows tree."

"Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and the blind,
And wake the dead," says he,
"Ye shall see one thing to master all:
'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree."

A son of God was the Goodly Fere
That bade us his brothers be.
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men.
I ha' seen him upon the tree.

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free,
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue
But never a cry cried he.

I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
On the hills o' Galilee,
They whined as he walked out calm between,
Wi' his eyes like the grey o' the sea.

Like the sea that brooks no voyaging
With the winds unleashed and free,
Like the sea that he cowed at Gennesaret
Wi' twey words spoke' suddenly.

A master of men was the Goodly Fere,
A mate of the wind and sea,
If they think they ha' slain our Goodly Fere
They are fools eternally.

I ha' seen him eat o' the honey-comb
Sin' they nailed him to the tree.

ΔΩΡΙΑ

Be in me as the eternal moods
        of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are—
        gaiety of flowers.
Have me in the strong loneliness
        of sunless cliffs
And of gray waters.
        Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,
        the shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember thee.

PORTRAIT D'UNE FEMME[1]

Your mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,
London has swept about you this score years
And bright ships left you this or that in fee:
Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,
Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed wares of price.
Great minds have sought you—lacking someone else.
You have been second always. Tragical?
No. You preferred it to the usual thing:
One dull man, dulling and uxorious,
One average mind—with one thought less, each year.
Oh, you are patient, I have seen you sit
Hours, where something might have floated up.
And now you pay one. Yes, you richly pay.
You are a person of some interest, one comes to you
And takes strange gain away:
Trophies fished up; some curious suggestion;
Fact that leads nowhere; and a tale for two,
Pregnant with mandrakes, or with something else
That might prove useful and yet never proves,
That never fits a corner or shows use,
Or finds its hour upon the loom of days:
The tarnished, gaudy, wonderful old work;
Idols, and ambergris and rare inlays,
These are your riches, your great store; and yet
For all this sea-hoard of deciduous things,
Strange woods half sodden, and new brighter stuff:
In the slow float of differing light and deep,
No! there is nothing! In the whole and all,
Nothing that's quite your own.
Yet this is you.

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 461.

Louis Untermeyer was born October 1, 1885, in New York City, where he has lived, except for brief intervals, ever since. His schooling was fitful and erratic; he sometimes boasts that he is the least educated writer in America. He attended the De Witt Clinton High School, but his failure to comprehend the essentials of Algebra and Geometry prevented him from graduating, and the halls of colleges were known to him only much later in life when he became an occasional lecturer. In youth his one ambition was to become a composer. At sixteen he appeared as a semi-professional pianist; at seventeen he entered his father's jewelry manufacturing establishment. For almost twenty years he commuted to Newark, New Jersey, being advanced from designer to factory manager and vice-president. In 1923 he retired and after two years of study abroad he returned to America to devote himself entirely to literature.

It is somewhat hard for the present compiler to consider this writer as severely as he deserves, the editor not having attained toward himself that Olympian detachment which is the goal of criticism. However, it is evident that his work is divided into four kinds: his poetry, his parodies, his translations and his critical collections. His initial volume of verse, *First Love* (1911), was a sequence of some seventy lyrics in which the influences of Heine and Housman were not only obvious but crippling. With the exception of about eight of these songs, the volume is devoid of character and, in spite of a certain technical ease, wholly undistinguished.

It was with *Challenge* (1914), reissued in a slightly revised edition in 1920, that the author first spoke in his own idiom. Although the ghost of Henley haunts some of these pages, and although the volume would benefit greatly by a few less "urges" and "surges," poems like "Landscapes" and "Caliban in the Coal Mines" show "a fresh and lyrical sympathy with the modern world. . . . His vision" (thus writes *The Boston Transcript*) "is a social vision, his spirit a passionately energized command of the forces of justice." *Challenge* was succeeded by *These Times* (1917), an "interval" book which, lacking the unity of its predecessor, sought, though it did not always attain, larger horizons. *The New Adam* (1920) is structurally more of a unit; "a frank expression of the modern poet's conception of love, this New Adam,

caught in the eternal struggle of the flesh, is the child of a complex and analytical age." Individually, the poems alternate with a curious regularity between separate successes and failures.

Roast Leviathan (1923) is, by all odds, the ripest and most varied of the volumes. It was hailed as the author's best volume not only by the American but by the English critics. Being too near to consider it dispassionately, the editor turns brazenly to the latter to support his own partiality. "In *Roast Leviathan*" wrote *The Observer,* "Mr. Untermeyer's natural luxuriance and exuberance are never out of place; the reader can believe he is meeting the very Leviathan of Job and the psalmist." "The title-poem, with its lavish use of interior rhyme and assonance, has the intricate brilliance of an Oriental tapestry." Edwin Muir, the author of *Attitudes,* wrote in *The New Age,* "This volume shows real reasons for its author's fame. He has, indeed, more vigor than a dozen of poets who have a reputation equal to his. On every subject he treats, he gives opulent measure, an opulence within the reach of nobody in contemporary verse but himself. He has absorbed and he expresses vividly the central thought of our day; his utterance is the expression of a mind of vitality and a generosity uncommon in this age."

As a parodist, four volumes of his critical satires have appeared: *The Younger Quire* (1911), a tiny burlesque of an anthology (*The Younger Choir*) issued anonymously, of which only one hundred copies were printed; *"—And Other Poets"* (1917); *Including Horace* (1919), paraphrases of the Latin bard as various classic and modern poets might have rendered him; and *Heavens* (1922) in which the author, after gently mocking his contemporaries, bids farewell to the field of parody.

As translator, he has published several volumes, of which the best known are *Poems of Heinrich Heine* (1917, Revised Edition, 1923) and *The Fat of the Cat* (1925), freely paraphrased from the Swiss stories of Gottfried Keller.

A collection of essays, *The New Era in American Poetry* (1919), was amplified and made into a more balanced and comprehensive set of twenty subdivided chapters under the title *American Poetry Since 1900* (1923). The two collections, *Modern American Poetry* and *Modern British Poetry* have been revised and enlarged several times since their original publication in 1919 and 1920 and are being used as textbooks in various universities. A collection of

"modern poems for modern children," *This Singing World,* appeared in 1923. Besides confessing himself the author of these works the subject under discussion admits having been one of the editors of *The Seven Arts* and, for a while, one of the editorial board of *The Masses* and *The Liberator.*

CALIBAN IN THE COAL MINES

God, we don't like to complain;
  We know that the mine is no lark.
But—there's the pools from the rain;
  But—there's the cold and the dark.

God, You don't know what it is—
  You, in Your well-lighted sky—
Watching the meteors whizz;
  Warm, with the sun always by.

God, if You had but the moon
  Stuck in Your cap for a lamp,
Even You'd tire of it soon,
  Down in the dark and the damp.

Nothing but blackness above
  And nothing that moves but the cars. . . .
God, if You wish for our love,
  Fling us a handful of stars!

LANDSCAPES

The rain was over, and the brilliant air
Made every polished blade of grass appear
Distinct and startling—everything was there
With sharpened outlines, vigorously clear,
As though one saw it in a crystal sphere:

The rusty sumac with its twisted spires—
The golden-rod lighting a million fires
(A million torches swinging in the wind)—
A single poplar, lithe and silver skinned,
Half like a naked boy, half like a sword—
Clouds, like the haughty banners of the Lord—
A group of pansies with their shrewish faces
(Little old ladies cackling over laces),
The quaint, unhurried road that curved so well—
The prim petunias with their rich, rank smell—
The lettuce-birds, the creepers in the field—
How arrogantly were they all revealed!
How richly did the least of them survive,
So frank and strong, so radiantly alive!

And over all the morning-minded earth
There seemed to spread a new enkindling mirth,
Piercing the stubborn stones until I saw
The toad face heaven without shame or awe,
The ant confront the stars, and every weed
Grow proud as though it bore a royal seed,
While all the things that die and decompose
Sent forth their bloom as richly as the rose. . . .
Oh, what a liberal power that made them thrive
And keep the very dirt that died, alive.

Here I beheld the slender willow-tree,
No longer calm or drooping listlessly,
Letting its languid branches sway and fall
As though it danced in some sad ritual,
But rather like a young, athletic girl,
Fearless and gay, her hair all out of curl
And flying in the wind—her head thrown back,
Her arms flung up, her garments flowing slack,
And all her rushing spirits running over. . . .
What made an innocent willow such a rover?
What forced the staid and stalwart apple-trees,

That stood for years knee-deep in velvet peace,
To turn their fruit to little worlds of flame,
And burn the trembling orchard there below?
What lit the heart of every golden-glow?
Why was no seed uncertain of its aim,
No moonrise tiresome, no April tame? . . .
Beauty, the undefeated, brought to birth
Each tiny triumph of the laboring earth.

Then, with abrupt and visionary eyes,
I saw the huddled tenements arise.
Here where the merry clover danced and shone
Sprang agonies of iron, leagues of stone;
There, where green Silence laughed or stood enthralled,
Cheap music blared and evil alleys sprawled.
The roaring avenues, the shrieking mills,
Brothels and prisons on those kindly hills—
The menace of these things swept over me:
A threatening, unconquerable sea.

A stirring landscape and a generous earth;
Clean winds that shouted with benevolent mirth.
And then the city, like some hideous sore. . . .
Good God, and what is all this beauty for?

PRAYER

God, though this life is but a wraith,
  Although we know not what we use,
Although we grope with little faith,
  Give me the heart to fight—and lose.

Ever insurgent let me be,
  Make me more daring than devout;
From sleek contentment keep me free,
  And fill me with a buoyant doubt.

Open my eyes to visions girt
With beauty, and with wonder lit—
But let me always see the dirt,
And all that spawn and die in it.

Open my ears to music; let
Me thrill with Spring's first flutes and drums—
But never let me dare forget
The bitter ballads of the slums.

From compromise and things half-done,
Keep me, with stern and stubborn pride.
And when, at last, the fight is won,
God, keep me still unsatisfied.

WATERS OF BABYLON

What presses about us here in the evening
As you open a window and stare at a stone-gray sky,
And the streets give back the jangle of meaningless movement
That is tired of life and almost too tired to die.

Night comes on, and even the night is wounded;
There, on its breast, it carries a curved, white scar.
What will you find out there that is not torn and anguished?
Can God be less distressed than the least of His creatures are?

Below are the blatant lights in a huddled squalor;
Above are futile fires in freezing space.
What can they give that you should look to them for compassion
Though you bare your heart and lift an imploring face?

They have seen, by countless waters and windows,
The women of your race facing a stony sky;
They have heard, for thousands of years, the voices of women
Asking them: "Why . . . ?"

Let the night be; it has neither knowledge nor pity.
One thing alone can hope to answer your fear;
It is that which struggles and blinds us and burns between us. . . .
Let the night be. Close the window, belovèd. . . . Come here.

HANDS

Strange, how this smooth and supple joint can be
Put to so many purposes. It checks
And rears the monsters of machinery
And shapes the idle gallantries of sex.

Those hands that light the fuse and dig the trap,
Fingers that spin the earth or plunge through shame—
And yours, that lie so lightly in your lap,
Are only blood and dust—all are the same.

What mastery directs them through the world
And gives these delicate bones so great a power?
You drop your head. You sleep. Your hands are curled
Loosely, like some half-opened, perfumed flower.

An hour ago they burned in mine and sent
Armies with banners charging through my veins.
Now they are cool and white; they rest content,
Curved in a smile. The mystery remains.

FROM "ROAST LEVIATHAN"

It is the final Day.
A blast of Gabriel's horn has torn away
The last haze from our eyes, and we can see
Past the three hundred skies and gaze upon
The Ineffable Name engraved deep in the sun.

Now one by one, the pious and the just
Are seated by us, radiantly risen
From their dull prison in the dust.
And then the festival begins!
A sudden music spins great webs of sound
Spanning the ground, the stars and their companions;
While from the cliffs and cañons of blue air,
Prayers of all colors, cries of exultation
Rise into choruses of singing gold.
And at the height of this bright consecration,
The whole Creation's rolled before us.
The seven burning heavens unfold. . . .
We see the first (the only one we knew)
Dispersed and, shining through,
The other six declining: Those that hold
The stars and moons, together with all those
Containing rain and fire and sullen weather;
Cellars of dew-fall higher than the brim;
Huge arsenals with centuries of snows;
Infinite rows of storms and swarms of seraphim. . . .

Divided now are winds and waters. Sea and land,
Tohu and Bohu, light and darkness, stand
Upright on either hand.
And down this terrible aisle,
While heaven's ranges roar aghast,
Pours a vast file of strange and hidden things:
Forbidden monsters, crocodiles with wings,
Translated flesh that sings and glows
With more fresh colors than the rainbow knows. . . .
For thrice three hundred years the full parade
Files past, a cavalcade of fears and wonder.
Then thunder—and the vast aisle clears.

Now comes our constantly increased reward.
The Lord commands that monstrous beast,
Leviathan, to be our feast.

What cheers ascend from horde on ravenous horde!
One hears the towering creature rend the seas,
Frustrated, cowering, and his pleas ignored.
In vain his great, belated tears are poured—
For this he was created, kept and nursed.
Cries burst from all the millions that attend:
"Ascend, Leviathan, it is the end!
We hunger and we thirst! Ascend!" . . .

Observe him first, my friend.

God's deathless plaything rolls an eye
Five hundred thousand cubits high.
The smallest scale upon his tail
Could hide six dolphins and a whale.
His nostrils breathe—and on the spot
The churning waves turn seething hot.
If he be hungry, one huge fin
Drives seven thousand fishes in;
And when he drinks what he may need,
The rivers of the earth recede.
Yet he is more than huge and strong—
Twelve brilliant colors play along
His sides until, compared to him,
The naked, burning sun seems dim.
New scintillating rays extend
Through endless singing space and rise
Into an ecstasy that cries:
"Ascend, Leviathan, ascend!"

God now commands the multi-colored bands
Of angels to intrude and slay the beast
That His good sons may have a feast of food.
But as they come, Leviathan sneezes twice . . .
And, numb with sudden pangs, each arm hangs slack.
Black terror seizes them; blood freezes into ice
And every angel flees from the attack!

God, with a look that spells eternal law,
Compels them back.
But, though they fight and smite him tail and jaw,
Nothing avails; upon his scales their swords
Break like frayed cords or, like a blade of straw,
Bend towards the hilt and wilt like faded grass.

A pause.
The angel host withdraws
With empty boasts throughout its sullen files.
Suddenly God smiles. . . .
On the walls of heaven a tumble of light is caught.
Low thunder rumbles like an afterthought;
And God's slow laughter calls:
"Behemot!"

Behemot, sweating blood,
Uses for his daily food
All the fodder, flesh and juice
That twelve tall mountains can produce.

Jordan, flooded to the brim,
Is a single gulp to him;
Two great streams from Paradise
Cool his lips and scarce suffice.

When he shifts from side to side
Earthquakes gape and open wide;
When a nightmare makes him snore,
All the dead volcanoes roar.

In the space between each toe,
Kingdoms rise and saviours go;
Epochs fall and causes die
In the lifting of his eye.

Wars and justice, love and death,
These are but his wasted breath;

Chews a planet for his cud—
Behemot, sweating blood.

Roused from his unconcern,
Behemot burns with anger.
Dripping sleep and languor from his heavy haunches,
He turns from deep disdain and launches
Himself upon the thickening air,
And, with weird cries of sickening despair,
Flies at Leviathan.
None can surmise the struggle that ensues—
The eyes lose sight of it and words refuse
To tell the story in its gory might.
Night passes after night,
And still the fight continues, still the sparks
Fly from the iron sinews, . . . till the marks
Of fire and belching thunder fill the dark
And, almost torn asunder, one falls stark,
Hammering upon the other! . . .
What clamor now is born, what crashings rise!
Hot lightnings lash the skies and frightening cries
Clash with the hymns of saints and seraphim,
While bloody limbs thrash through a ruddy dusk.

Then come the angels!
With hoists and levers, joists and poles,
With knives and cleavers, ropes and saws,
Down the long slopes to the gaping maws,
The angels hasten; hacking and carving,
So naught will be lacking for the starving
Chosen of God, who in frozen wonderment
Realize now what the terrible thunder meant.
How their mouths water while they are looking
At miles of slaughter and sniffing the cooking!
Whiffs of delectable fragrance swim by;
Spice-laden vagrants that float and entice,
Tickling the throat and brimming the eye.

Ah! what rejoicing and crackling and roasting!
Ah! How the boys sing as, cackling and boasting,
The angels' old wives and their nervous assistants
Run in to serve us. . . .
And while we are toasting
The Fairest of all, they call from the distance—
The rare ones of Time, they share our enjoyment;
Their only employment to bear jars of wine
And shine like the stars in a circle of glory.
Here sways Rebekah accompanied by Zilpah;
Miriam plays to the singing of Bilhah;
Hagar has tales for us, Judith her story;
Esther exhales bright romances and musk.
There, in the dusky light, Salome dances.
Sara and Rachel and Leah and Ruth,
Fairer than ever and all in their youth,
Come at our call and go by our leave.
And, from her bower of beauty, walks Eve
While, with the voice of a flower, she sings
Of Eden, young earth and the birth of all things. . . .

Peace without end.
Peace will descend on us, discord will cease;
And we, now so wretched, will lie stretched out
Free of old doubt, on our cushions of ease.
And, like a gold canopy over our bed,
The skin of Leviathan, tail-tip to head,
Soon will be spread till it covers the skies.
Light will still rise from it; millions of bright
Facets of brilliance, shaming the white
Glass of the moon, inflaming the night.

So Time shall pass and rest and pass again,
Burn with an endless zest and then return,
Walk at our side and tide us to new joys;
God's voice to guide us, and our faith our staff.
Thus shall Life be when Death has disappeared. . . .

Jeered at? Well, let them laugh.

BOOK REVIEW

Finished and flawless,
Crisply designed,
Here is the aweless
Breath of the mind.
Light without glamour
Illumines this world;
Chisel and hammer
Shape all these curled
Odorless petals,
Keen, cutting fronds,
Into bright metals
Harder than bronze.
Thin as old glass
Still undemolished,
Even the grass
Is painted and polished,
Spun out and waved,
Carefully counted,
Lacquered, engraved,
And finally mounted
With so many millions
Of jewels for color
That even the brilliance
Grows duller and duller.
Rhyme, like a shutter,
Claps through the words.
Mechanical birds
Woodenly flutter.
Clouds of pale cardboard
Creak through the sky;
While, with a hard, bored
Baffled eye,
We turn from these mobile
Toys that are offered,

Seeking a noble
Phrase that has suffered.
But in this airless
Vacuum
Nothing so careless
Can ever come.
Never a burden,
A cry or a curse,
Can hope to be heard in
This crackling verse.
Its one endeavor
Is to be smooth;
Hard and clever,
Its highest truth.
Without a blunder,
It stiffens and dies—
What might have been wonder
Is scarcely surprise.

THE DARK CHAMBER

The brain forgets, but the blood will remember.
There, when the play of sense is over,
The last, low spark in the darkest chamber
Will hold all there is of love and lover.

The war of words, the life-long quarrel
Of self against self will resolve into nothing;
Less than the chain of berry-red coral
Crying against the dead black of her clothing.

What has the brain that it hopes to last longer?
The blood will take from forgotten violence,
The groping, the break of her voice in anger.
There will be left only color and silence.

These will remain, these will go searching
  Your veins for life when the flame of life smoulders:
The night that you two saw the mountains marching
  Up against dawn with the stars on their shoulders—

The jetting poplars' arrested fountains
  As you drew her under them, easing her pain—
The notes, not the words, of a half-finished sentence—
  The music, the silence. . . . These will remain.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

Jean Starr was born at Zanesville, Ohio, May 13, 1886, and educated at the Putnam Seminary in the city of her birth. At sixteen she came to New York City, pursuing special studies at Columbia. In 1907 she married Louis Untermeyer and, although she had written some prose previous to the poetic renascence, her first volume was published more than ten years later.

Growing Pains (1918) is a thin book of thirty-four poems, the result of eight years of slow and self-critical creation. This careful and highly selective process does much to bring the volume up to an unusually high level; a severity of taste and standards maintain the poet on the same austere plane. Perfection is always a passion with her; the first poem in the book ("Clay Hills") declares it with an almost intolerant definiteness.

Acutely self-analytical, there is a stern, uncompromising relentlessness toward her introspections that keeps them from being wistful or pathetic. These poems are, as she explains in her title-poem—

> No songs for an idle lute,
> No pretty tunes of coddled ills,
> But the bare chart of my growing pains.

Intellect is always in the ascendency, even in the most ecstatic verses. In a curiously religious poem, "A Man" (dedicated to her father), she pictures herself as a child, and expresses the whole psychology of our juvenile love of poor literature in such a phrase as:

A book held gaping on my knees,
Watering a sterile romance with my thoughts.

But it is not only her keen search for truth and an equally keen eye for the exact word that make these poems distinctive. A sharp color sense, a surprising whimsicality, a translation of the ordinary in terms of the beautiful, illumine such poems as "Sinfonia Domestica," "Clothes," and the much quoted "Autumn." In the last named, with its brilliant combination of painting and housewifery, Mrs. Untermeyer has reproduced her early environment with a bright pungency; "Verhaeren's Flemish *genre* pictures are no better," writes Amy Lowell. Several of her purely pictorial poems establish a swift kinship between the most romantic and most prosaic objects. The tiny "Moonrise" is an example; so is "High Tide," that, in one extended metaphor, turns the mere fact of a physical law into an arresting and noble fancy. Just as "Autumn" is a celebration of domesticity, an almost holy pæan of housekeeping, so most of this poet's work embodies an essentially feminine, or, one might better say, womanly attitude to life.

Dreams Out of Darkness (1921) is a ripening of this author's powers with a richer musical undercurrent. This increase of melody is manifest on every page, possibly most striking in "Lake Song," which, beneath its symbolism, is one of the most famous unrhymed lyrics of the period. The form of this poetry is, as Joseph Freeman has written, "distinguished not only by the clear qualities of chiseled marble, not only by a music so melodious that some of her free verse pieces have to be read two or three times before their lack of rhyme becomes noticeable, but also by its intellectual fluidity. She has mastered her emotions without deadening them." And Amy Lowell, amplifying this theme, concludes, "After all, beautiful as Mrs. Untermeyer's forms often are, it is her thoughts that make the book. This is the very heart of a woman, naked and serious, beautiful and unashamed."

It is a curious fact that whereas *Growing Pains* is almost entirely in free verse, most of *Dreams Out of Darkness* is in regular formal patterns. Since the publication of the second volume, Mrs. Untermeyer's verse has employed rhyme with even greater frequency, "Rescue" being a particularly effective example of the double music of end- and interior-rhyming.

HIGH TIDE

I edged back against the night.
The sea growled assault on the wave-bitten shore.
And the breakers,
Like young and impatient hounds,
Sprang with rough joy on the shrinking sand.
Sprang—but were drawn back slowly
With a long, relentless pull,
Whimpering, into the dark.

Then I saw who held them captive;
And I saw how they were bound
With a broad and quivering leash of light,
Held by the moon,
As, calm and unsmiling,
She walked the deep fields of the sky.

AUTUMN

(*To My Mother*)

How memory cuts away the years,
And how clean the picture comes
Of autumn days, brisk and busy;
Charged with keen sunshine.
And you, stirred with activity,
The spirit of those energetic days.

There was our back-yard,
So plain and stripped of green,
With even the weeds carefully pulled away
From the crooked red bricks that made the walk,
And the earth on either side so black.

Autumn and dead leaves burning in the sharp air.
And winter comforts coming in like a pageant.
I shall not forget them:—
Great jars laden with the raw green of pickles,
Standing in a solemn row across the back of the porch,
Exhaling the pungent dill;
And in the very center of the yard,
You, tending the great catsup kettle of gleaming copper,
Where fat, red tomatoes bobbed up and down
Like jolly monks in a drunken dance.
And there were bland banks of cabbages that came by the wagon-load,
Soon to be cut into delicate ribbons
Only to be crushed by the heavy, wooden stompers.
Such feathery whiteness—to come to kraut!
And after, there were grapes that hid their brightness under a grey dust,
Then gushed thrilling, purple blood over the fire;
And enamelled crab-apples that tricked with their fragrance
But were bitter to taste.
And there were spicy plums and ill-shaped quinces,
And long string beans floating in pans of clear water
Like slim, green fishes.
And there was fish itself,
Salted, silver herring from the city. . . .

And you moved among these mysteries,
Absorbed and smiling and sure;
Stirring, tasting, measuring,
With the precision of a ritual.
I like to think of you in your years of power—
You, now so shaken and so powerless—
High priestess of your home.

SINFONIA DOMESTICA

When the white wave of a glory that is hardly I
  Breaks through my mind and washes it clean,
I know at last the meaning of my ecstasy,
  And know at last my wish and what it can mean.

To have sped out of life that night—to have vanished
  Not as a vision, but as something touched, yet grown
Radiant as the moonlight, circling my naked shoulder;
  Wrapped in a dream of beauty, longed for, but never
    known.

For how with our daily converse, even the sweet sharing
  Of thoughts, of food, of home, of common life,
How shall I be that glory, that last desire
  For which men struggle? Is Romance in a wife?

Must I bend a heart that is bowed to breaking
  With a frustration, inevitable and slow,
And bank my flame to a low hearth fire, believing
  You'll come for warmth and life to its tempered glow?

Shall I mould my hope anew, to one of service,
  And tell my uneasy soul, "Behold, this is good"?
And meet you (if we do meet), even at Heaven's threshold,
  With ewer and basin, with clothing and with food?

LAKE SONG

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The weeping of ancient women
Who grieved without rebellion.

The lake falls over the shore
Like tears on their curven bosoms.
Here is languid, luxurious wailing;
The wailing of kings' daughters.

So do we ever cry,
A soft, unmutinous crying,
When we know ourselves each a princess
Locked fast within her tower.

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The fertile tears of women
That water the dreams of men.

CLAY HILLS

It is easy to mould the yielding clay.
And many shapes grow into beauty
Under the facile hand.
But forms of clay are lightly broken;
They will lie shattered and forgotten in a dingy corner.

Yet underneath the slipping clay
Is rock . . .
I would rather work in stubborn rock
All the years of my life,
And make one strong thing
And set it in a high, clean place,
To recall the granite strength of my desire.

OLD MAN

When an old man walks with lowered head
And eyes that do not seem to see,
I wonder does he ponder on
The worm he was or is to be.

Or has he turned his gaze within,
Lost to his own vicinity;
Erecting in a doubtful dream
Frail bridges to Infinity.

RESCUE

Wind and wave and the swinging rope
Were calling me last night;
None to save and little hope,
No inner light.

Each snarling lash of the stormy sea
Curled like a hungry tongue.
One desperate splash—and no use to me
The noose that swung!

Death reached out three crooked claws
To still my clamoring pain.
I wheeled about, and Life's gray jaws
Grinned once again.

To sea I gazed, and then I turned
Stricken toward the shore,
Praying half-crazed to a moon that burned
Above your door.

And at your door, you discovered me;
And at your heart, I sobbed. . . .
And if there be more of eternity
Let me be robbed.

Let me be clipped of that heritage
And burned for ages through;
Freed and stripped of my fear and rage—
But not of you.

John Gould Fletcher was born at Little Rock, Arkansas, January 3, 1886. He was educated at Phillips Academy (Andover, Massachusetts) and Harvard (1903-7) and, after spending several years in Massachusetts, moved to England, where, except for brief visits to the United States, he has lived ever since.

In 1913 Fletcher published five tiny books of poems which he has referred to as "his literary wild oats," five small collections of experimental and faintly interesting verse. In 1914, shortly after the publication of his *Fire and Wine,* one of the early quintet, Fletcher joined the Imagists. With H. D. and Amy Lowell he became one of the leaders of this interesting movement and his contributions were among the outstanding features of the three anthologies which furnish so illuminating a record of the æsthetics of the period. Coincident with the first appearance of *Some Imagist Poets,* Fletcher discarded his previous style and emerged as a decidedly less conservative and far more arresting poet with *Irradiations—Sand and Spray* (1915). This volume is full of an extraordinary fancy; imagination riots through it, even though it is sometimes a bloodless and bodiless imagination. It is crowded—even overcrowded—with shifting subtleties, a brilliant if haphazard series of improvisations.

In the following book, *Goblins and Pagodas* (1916), Fletcher carries his unrelated harmonies much further. Color dominates him; the ambitious set of eleven "color symphonies" is an elaborate design in which the tone as well as the thought is summoned by color-associations, sometimes closely related, sometimes far-fetched. "It contains," says Conrad Aiken in his appreciative chapter on Fletcher in *Scepticisms,* "little of the emotion which relates to the daily life of men and women. . . . It is a sort of absolute poetry, a poetry of detached waver and brilliance, a beautiful flowering of language alone—a parthenogenesis, as if language were fertilized by itself rather than by thought or feeling. Remove the magic of phrase and sound and there is nothing left: no thread of continuity, no thought, no story, no emotion. But the magic of phrase and sound is powerful, and it takes one into a fantastic world."

Meanwhile, Fletcher has been developing. After having appeared in the three Imagist anthologies, he sought for depths rather than surfaces. Beginning with his majestic "Lincoln," his work

has had a closer relation to humanity. A moving mysticism speaks from *The Tree of Life* (1918); the more obviously native *Granite and Breakers* (1921) and the later uncollected poems have a simplicity which is as new to this poet as it is passionate. The recent poems, though less superficially arresting than the ones by which he is best known, reach depths which the preceding verses rarely attained. Although the unconscious too often dictates Fletcher's fantasies, a calm music dominates his newer poems, a grave and subdued lyricism moves and enriches them. Never a popular poet, Fletcher gains—and suffers—from his very originality.

FROM "IRRADIATIONS"

I

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds;
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

Whirlpools of purple and gold,
Winds from the mountains of cinnabar,
Lacquered mandarin moments, palanquins swaying and balancing
Amid vermilion pavilions, against the jade balustrades,
Glint of the glittering wings of dragon-flies in the light:
Silver filaments, golden flakes settling downwards,
Rippling, quivering flutters, repulse and surrender,
The sun broidered upon the rain,
The rain rustling with the sun.

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds;
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

II

Flickering of incessant rain
On flashing pavements:
Sudden scurry of umbrellas:
Bending, recurved blossoms of the storm.

The winds come clanging and clattering
From long white highroads whipping in ribbons up summits:
They strew upon the city gusty wafts of apple-blossom,
And the rustling of innumerable translucent leaves.

Uneven tinkling, the lazy rain
Dripping from the eaves.

III

The trees, like great jade elephants,
Chained, stamp and shake 'neath the gadflies of the breeze;
The trees lunge and plunge, unruly elephants:
The clouds are their crimson howdah-canopies,
The sunlight glints like the golden robe of a Shah.
Would I were tossed on the wrinkled backs of those trees.

IV

O seeded grass, you army of little men
Crawling up the long slope with quivering, quick blades of steel:
You who storm millions of graves, tiny green tentacles of Earth,
Interlace yourselves tightly over my heart,
And do not let me go:
For I would lie here forever and watch with one eye
The pilgrimaging ants in your dull, savage jungles,
The while with the other I see the stiff lines of the slope
Break in mid-air, a wave surprisingly arrested,—
And above them, wavering, dancing, bodiless, colorless, unreal,
The long thin lazy fingers of the heat.

V

The morning is clean and blue and the wind blows up the clouds:
Now my thoughts gathered from afar

Once again in their patched armour, with rusty plumes and
blunted swords,
Move out to war.

Smoking our morning pipes we shall ride two and two
Through the woods,
For our old cause keeps us together,
And our hatred is so precious not death or defeat can break it.

God willing, we shall this day meet that old enemy
Who has given us so many a good beating.
Thank God we have a cause worth fighting for,
And a cause worth losing and a good song to sing.

GREEN SYMPHONY

I

The glittering leaves of the rhododendrons
Balance and vibrate in the cool air;
While in the sky above them
White clouds chase each other.

Like scampering rabbits,
Flashes of sunlight sweep the lawn;
They fling in passing
Patterns of shadow,
Golden and green.

With long cascades of laughter,
The mating birds dart and swoop to the turf:
'Mid their mad trillings
Glints the gay sun behind the trees.

Down there are deep blue lakes:
Orange blossom droops in the water.

In the tower of the winds
All the bells are set adrift:
Jingling
For the dawn.

Thin fluttering streamers
Of breeze lash through the swaying boughs,
Palely expectant
The earth receives the slanting rain.

The glittering leaves of the rhododendron
Are shaken like blue-green blades of grass,
Flickering, cracking, falling:
Splintering in a million fragments.

The wind runs laughing up the slope
Stripping off handfuls of wet green leaves,
To fling in people's faces.
Wallowing on the daisy-powdered turf,
Clutching at the sunlight,
Cavorting in the shadow.

Like baroque pearls,
Like cloudy emeralds,
The clouds and the trees clash together;
Whirling and swirling,
In the tumult
Of the spring,
And the wind.

II

The trees splash the sky with their fingers,
A restless green rout of stars.

With whirling movement
They swing their boughs

About their stems:
Planes on planes of light and shadow
Pass among them,
Opening fanlike to fall.

The trees are like a sea;
Tossing;
Trembling,
Roaring,
Wallowing,
Darting their long green flickering fronds up at the sky,
Spotted with white blossom-spray.

The trees are roofs:
Hollow caverns of cool blue shadow,
Solemn arches
In the afternoons.
The whole vast horizon
In terrace beyond terrace,
Pinnacle above pinnacle,
Lifts to the sky
Serrated ranks of green on green.

They caress the roofs with their fingers,
They sprawl about the river to look into it;
Up the hill they come
Gesticulating challenge:
They cower together
In dark valleys;
They yearn out over the fields.

Enamelled domes
Tumble upon the grass,
Crashing in ruin,
Quiet at last.

The trees lash the sky with their leaves,
Uneasily shaking their dark green manes.

III

Far let the voices of the mad wild birds be calling me,
I will abide in this forest of pines.

When the wind blows
Battling through the forest,
I hear it distantly,
The crash of a perpetual sea.

When the rain falls,
I watch the silver spears slanting downwards
From pale river-pools of sky,
Enclosed in dark fronds.

When the sun shines,
I weave together distant branches till they enclose mighty
circles,
I sway to the movement of hooded summits,
I swim leisurely in deep blue seas of air.

I hug the smooth bark of stately red pillars
And with cones carefully scattered
I mark the progression of dark dial-shadows
Flung diagonally downwards through the afternoon.

This turf is not like turf:
It is a smooth dry carpet of velvet,
Embroidered with brown patterns of needles and cones.
These trees are not like trees:
They are innumerable feathery pagoda-umbrellas,
Stiffly ungracious to the wind,
Teetering on red-lacquered stems.

In the evening I listen to the winds' lisping,
While the conflagrations of the sunset flicker and clash
behind me,

Flamboyant crenellations of glory amid the charred ebony
boles.

In the night the fiery nightingales
Shall clash and trill through the silence:
Like the voices of mermaids crying
From the sea.

Long ago has the moon whelmed this uncompleted temple.
Stars swim like gold fish far above the black arches.

Far let the timid feet of dawn fly to catch me:
I will abide in this forest of pines:
For I have unveiled naked beauty,
And the things that she whispered to me in the darkness,
Are buried deep in my heart.

Now let the black tops of the pine-trees break like a spent
wave,
Against the grey sky:
These are tombs and temples and altars sun-kindled for me.

LONDON NIGHTFALL

I saw the shapes that stood upon the clouds:
And they were tiger-breasted, shot with light,
And all of them, lifting long trumpets together,
Blew over the city, for the night to come.
Down in the street, we floundered in the mud;
Above, in endless files, gold angels came
And stood upon the clouds, and blew their horns
For night.

Like a wet petal crumpled,
Twilight fell soddenly on the weary city;
The 'buses lurched and groaned,
The shops put up their doors.

But skywards, far aloft,
The angels, vanishing, waved broad plumes of gold,
Summoning spirits from a thousand hills
To pour the thick night out upon the earth.

THE SKATERS

Black swallows swooping or gliding
In a flurry of entangled loops and curves;
The skaters skim over the frozen river.
And the grinding click of their skates as they impinge upon the surface,
Is like the brushing together of thin wing-tips of silver

LINCOLN *

I

Like a gaunt, scraggly pine
Which lifts its head above the mournful sandhills;
And patiently, through dull years of bitter silence,
Untended and uncared for, begins to grow.

Ungainly, labouring, huge,
The wind of the north has twisted and gnarled its branches;
Yet in the heat of midsummer days, when thunder-clouds ring the horizon,
A nation of men shall rest beneath its shade.

And it shall protect them all,
Hold everyone safe there, watching aloof in silence;
Until at last one mad stray bolt from the zenith
Shall strike it in an instant down to earth.

* See pages 83, 147, 158, 279, 293, 298.

II

There was a darkness in this man; an immense and hollow darkness,
Of which we may not speak, nor share with him, nor enter;
A darkness through which strong roots stretched downwards into the earth
Towards old things;
Towards the herdman-kings who walked the earth and spoke with God,
Towards the wanderers who sought for they knew not what, and found their goal at last;
Towards the men who waited, only waited patiently when all seemed lost,
Many bitter winters of defeat;
Down to the granite of patience
These roots swept, knotted fibrous roots, prying, piercing, seeking,
And drew from the living rock and the living waters about it
The red sap to carry upwards to the sun.

Not proud, but humble,
Only to serve and pass on, to endure to the end through service;
For the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and all that bring not forth good fruit
Shall be cut down on the day to come and cast into the fire.

III

There is silence abroad in the land to-day,
And in the hearts of men, a deep and anxious silence;
And, because we are still at last, those bronze lips slowly open,
Those hollow and weary eyes take on a gleam of light.

Slowly a patient, firm-syllabled voice cuts through the endless silence
Like labouring oxen that drag a plow through the chaos of rude clay-fields:
"I went forward as the light goes forward in early spring,
But there were also many things which I left behind.

"Tombs that were quiet;
One, of a mother, whose brief light went out in the darkness,
One, of a loved one, the snow on whose grave is long falling,
One, only of a child, but it was mine.

"Have you forgot your graves? Go, question them in anguish,
Listen long to their unstirred lips. From your hostages to silence,
Learn there is no life without death, no dawn without sunsetting,
No victory but to Him who has given all."

IV

The clamour of cannon dies down, the furnace-mouth of the battle is silent.
The midwinter sun dips and descends, the earth takes on afresh its bright colours.
But he whom we mocked and obeyed not, he whom we scorned and mistrusted,
He has descended, like a god, to his rest.

Over the uproar of cities,
Over the million intricate threads of life wavering and crossing,
In the midst of problems we know not, tangling, perplexing, ensnaring,
Rises one white tomb alone.

Beam over it, stars.
Wrap it round, stripes—stripes red for the pain that he bore for you—
Enfold it forever, O flag, rent, soiled, but repaired through your anguish;
Long as you keep him there safe, the nations shall bow to your law.

Strew over him flowers:
Blue forget-me-nots from the north, and the bright pink arbutus
From the east, and from the west rich orange blossoms,
But from the heart of the land take the passion-flower;

Rayed, violet, dim,
With the nails that pierced, the cross that he bore and the circlet,
And beside it there lay also one lonely snow-white magnolia,
Bitter for remembrance of the healing which has passed.

BEFORE OLYMPUS

Across the sky run streaks of white light, aching;
Across the earth the chattering grass is sprawling;
Across the sea roll troubled gleams awaking,
Across the steeps dark broken shapes are crawling.

We have been scourged with youth, a rod in pickle
To cut the hide from our own hearts. We know
The tree of life is also cursed. We heed
The silent laughter of grey gods of time.

We do not seek the lithe and brittle music
Of swords and flame. We have no more desire
For glory or contempt. The moment flies
Past us, and shouting carries its echo on.

The clank of wheels and pumps, the screech of levers
No longer now afflicts our inmost bearing;
The old wise nightingales have longer ears,
They sing the blooming of wild immortelles.

And through the desolation of great cities
As in a madhouse we go peering where
Black butterflies flit about a carcass. Words
Gallop about the sky. The earth broods like a stone.

Heaven is a blank news-sheet fixed and trembling
Between the knees of God. The grass runs crawling.
The waves of the sea their laughter are dissembling,
But who will reap them when our scythes are falling?

ADVENT

I have no more gold;
I spent it all on foolish songs.
Gold I cannot give to you.

Incense, too, I burned
To the great idols of this world;
I must come with empty hands.

Myrrh I lost
In that darker sepulchre
Where another Christ
Died for man in vain.—

I can only give myself,
I have nothing left but this.
Naked I wait, naked I fall
Into Your Hands, Your Hands.

Hilda Doolittle was born September 10, 1886, at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. When she was still a child, her father became Director of the Flower Observatory and the family moved to a suburb in the outskirts of Philadelphia. Hilda Doolittle attended a private school in West Philadelphia; entered Bryn Mawr College in 1904; and went abroad, for what was intended to be a short sojourn, in 1911. After a visit to Italy and France she came to London, joining Ezra Pound and helping to organize the Imagists. Her work (signed "H. D.") began to appear in a few magazines and its unusual quality was recognized at once. Remaining for a while in London, she became one of the leaders of the movement (see Preface), creating through a chiseled verse, her flawless reproductions of Greek poetry and sculpture. In 1920 she made her long-deferred visit to America, settling on the Californian coast, returning, the following year, to England. Since 1921 H. D. has lived in a small town in Switzerland on the shore of Lake Geneva.

Her first collection, *Sea Garden,* appeared in 1916; an interval of five years elapsed before the publication of her second volume, *Hymen,* which was printed simultaneously in England and America in 1921.

H. D. is, by all odds, the most important of her group. She is the only one who has steadfastly held to the letter as well as the spirit of its *credo*. She is, in fact, the only true Imagist. Her poems, capturing the firm delicacy of the Greek models, are like a set of Tanagra figurines. Here, at first glance, the effect is chilling—beauty seems held in a frozen gesture. But it is in this very fixation of light, color and emotion that she achieves intensity. What at first seemed static becomes fluent; the arrested moment glows with a quivering tension.

Observe the poem entitled "Heat." Here, in the fewest possible words, is something beyond the description of heat—here is the effect of it. In these lines one feels the very weight and solidity of a midsummer afternoon.

Her efforts to draw the contemporary world are less happy. She is best in her reflections of clear-cut loveliness in a quietly pagan world. Her art, in its precision and polish, is curiously Hellenic; H. D., in most of her moods, seems less of a contemporary than an inspired anachronism.

Heliodora and Other Poems appeared in 1924. So much had

already been written concerning the form of H. D.'s poetry that it was no longer necessary to expatiate on the unique features of her metric. Even those least impressed by the program of the Imagists readily conceded her exquisite if oversubtle flavor, the stripped purity of her line, the precision of her epithets. But the most apparent feature of *Heliodora*—even more noticeable than its beauties of form—is its intensity. A freely declared passion radiates from lines which are at once ecstatic and austere. Even the most casual reading must convince one that this poet is not, as she first seemed to us, a Greek statue faintly flushed with life, a delightful but detached relic of another world. This is a woman responsive to color and pain, aroused by loveliness, shocked by betrayal, affected by all those manifestations which are too old to be timely, too fresh to be ancient.

Practically all of H. D.'s previous volumes were assembled in an excellent *Collected Poems* (1925) which contains not only her original work but the spirited translations from the Odyssey and her flexible expansions of the fragmentary phrases of Sappho.

OREAD

Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines.
Splash your great pines
On our rocks.
Hurl your green over us—
Cover us with your pools of fir.

PEAR TREE

Silver dust
lifted from the earth,
higher than my arms reach,
you have mounted.
O silver,
higher than my arms reach
you front us with great mass;

no flower ever opened
so staunch a white leaf,
no flower ever parted silver
from such rare silver;

O white pear,
your flower-tufts,
thick on the branch,
bring summer and ripe fruits
in their purple hearts.

HEAT

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air—
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut through the heat—
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

ORCHARD

I saw the first pear
as it fell—
the honey-seeking, golden-banded,
the yellow swarm,
was not more fleet than I,

(spare us from loveliness!)
and I fell prostrate,
crying:
you have flayed us with your blossoms,
spare us the beauty
of fruit-trees!

The honey-seeking
paused not;
the air thundered their song,
and I alone was prostrate.

O rough-hewn
god of the orchard,
I bring you an offering—
do you, alone unbeautiful,
son of the god,
spare us from loveliness:

these fallen hazel-nuts,
stripped late of their green sheaths,
grapes, red-purple,
their berries
dripping with wine;
pomegranates already broken,
and shrunken figs,
and quinces untouched,
I bring you as offering.

SONG

You are as gold
as the half-ripe grain
that merges to gold again,
as white as the white rain
that beats through
the half-opened flowers

of the great flower tufts
thick on the black limbs
of an Illyrian apple bough.

Can honey distill such fragrance
as your bright hair—
for your face is as fair as rain;
yet as rain that lies clear
on white honey-comb
lends radiance to the white wax,
so your hair on your brow
casts light for a shadow.

LETHE

Nor skin nor hide nor fleece
Shall cover you,
Nor curtain of crimson nor fine
Shelter of cedar-wood be over you,
Nor the fir-tree
Nor the pine.

Nor sight of whin nor gorse
Nor river-yew,
Nor fragrance of flowering bush,
Nor wailing of reed-bird to waken you.
Nor of linnet
Nor of thrush.

Nor word nor touch nor sight
Of lover, you
Shall long through the night but for this:
The roll of the full tide to cover you
Without question,
Without kiss.

FROM "LET ZEUS RECORD"

Stars wheel in purple, yours is not so rare
as Hesperus, nor yet so great a star
as bright Aldebaran or Sirius,
nor yet the stained and brilliant one of War;

stars turn in purple, glorious to the sight;
yours is not gracious as the Pleiads are,
nor as Orion's sapphires, luminous;

yet disenchanted, cold, imperious face,
when all the others, blighted, reel and fall,
your star, steel-set, keeps lone and frigid tryst
to freighted ships baffled in wind and blast.

LAIS

Let her who walks in Paphos
take the glass,
let Paphos take the mirror
and the work of frosted fruit,
gold apples set
with silver apple-leaf,
white leaf of silver
wrought with vein of gilt.

Let Paphos lift the mirror;
let her look
into the polished center of the disk.

Let Paphos take the mirror:
did she press
flowerlet of flame-flower
to the lustrous white

of the white forehead?
Did the dark veins beat
a deeper purple
than the wine-deep tint
of the dark flower?

Did she deck black hair,
one evening, with the winter-white
flower of the winter-berry?
Did she look (reft of her lover)
at a face gone white
under the chaplet
of white virgin-breath?

Lais, exultant, tyrannizing Greece,
Lais who kept her lovers in the porch,
lover on lover waiting
(but to creep
where the robe brushed the threshold
where still sleeps Lais),
so she creeps, Lais,
to lay her mirror at the feet
of her who reigns in Paphos.

Lais has left her mirror,
for she sees no longer in its depth
the Lais' self
that laughed exultant,
tyrannizing Greece.

Lais has left her mirror,
for she weeps no longer,
finding in its depth
a face, but other
than dark flame and white
feature of perfect marble.

Lais has left her mirror
(so one wrote)
to her who reigns in Paphos;
Lais who laughed a tyrant over Greece,
Lais who turned the lovers from the porch,
that swarm for whom now
Lais has no use;
Lais is now no lover of the glass,
seeing no more the face as once it was,
wishing to see that face and finding this.

SONGS FROM CYPRUS

I

Gather for festival
bright weed and purple shell;
make on the holy sand
pattern as one might make
who tread with rose-red heel
a measure
pleasureful;

such as those songs we made
in rose and myrtle shade
where rose and myrtle fell
(shell-petal or rose-shell)
on just such holy sand;
ah, the song
musical;

give me white rose and red;
find me in citron glade
citron of precious weight,
spread gold before her feet,
ah, weave the citron flower;
hail goddess
beautiful.

II

Where is the nightingale,
in what myrrh-wood and dim?
ah, let the night come black,
for we would conjure back
all that enchanted him,
all that enchanted him.

Where is the bird of fire?
in what packed hedge of rose?
in what roofed ledge of flower?
no other creature knows
what magic lurks within,
what magic lurks within.

Bird, bird, bird, bird, we cry,
hear, pity us in pain;
hearts break in the sunlight,
hearts break in daylight rain,
only night heals again,
only night heals again.

Hazel Hall

Hazel Hall was born February 7, 1886, in St. Paul, Minnesota, but as a small child was taken to Portland, Oregon, where she remained the rest of her life. Either from the effects of scarlet fever or as the result of a fall, she was unable to walk after she was twelve years old. But she never complained. As Ruth Hall, her sister, wrote in a letter to the editor, "The word 'invalid' was anathema in her ears. Although she was forced to spend her days in a wheel chair, she possessed a rare abundance of health, which enabled her to know life concretely, as a satisfaction for her senses, even though it might remain an abstract sorrow for her mind. She lived life thoroughly, admiring its complexities, with a fine relish for the irony which gave a bitter-sweet taste to the whole."

Curtains, her first volume, which appeared in 1921, is, in the main, a book of charming rather than arresting lyrics; it is evident from the poems that her needle was not only a means of support but a refuge for the poet. The fact that she herself could never walk made her extraordinarily sensitive to the tramp or shuffle of feet; her mind seemed filled with the thought of men marching eternally about the earth. And so her second book, *Walkers* (1923), is filled with the wonder of mere pedestrian life, of a boy whacking a stick against a wall, of couples passing at dusk, of feet half sinking in snow, of children's heels flashing in the sun.

Her third volume, upon which she was at work at the time of her death, will contain not only her finest writing, but, in all probability, the poems by which she will be remembered longest. These later poems contain all the appeal of the first two books with an emotional depth and a mental spaciousness which the early volumes barely suggested. Apart from any personal associations which make these lines more poignant still, the four poems here reprinted—all from her very last manuscripts—are those which no anthologist of the period can afford to overlook.

Although Hazel Hall was in sound health until a few weeks before her death, she seemed to have a premonition that the end was near even before she became critically ill. She died on May 11th, 1924. The last two poems which she wrote were "Slow Death" and "Riddle," both of which appeared in *The New Republic* a fortnight after her death.

FLIGHT

A bird may curve across the sky—
A feather of dusk, a streak of song;
And save a space and a bird to fly
There may be nothing all day long.

Flying through a cloud-made place
A bird may tangle east and west,
Maddened with going, crushing space
With the arrow of its breast.

Though never wind nor motion bring
It back again from indefinite lands,
The thin blue shadow of its wing
May cross and cross above your hands.

ANY WOMAN

When there is nothing left but darkness
And the day is like a leaf
Fallen onto sodden grasses,
You have earned a subtle grief.

Never let them take it from you,
Never let them come and say:
Night is made of black gauze; moonlight
Blows the filmy dark away.

You have a right to know the thickness
Of the night upon your face,
To feel the inky blue of nothing
Drift like ashes out of space.

You have a right to lift your fingers
And stare in pity at your hands
That are the exquisite frail mirrors
Of all the mind misunderstands.

Your hand, potent in portrayal,
Falls of its own weight to rest
In a quiet curve of sorrow
On the beating of your breast.

HERE COMES THE THIEF

Here comes the thief
Men nickname Time,
Oh, hide you, leaf,
And hide you, rhyme.
Leaf, he would take you
And leave you rust.
Rhyme, he would flake you
With spotted dust.
Scurry to cover,
Delicate maid
And serious lover.
Girl, bind the braid
Of your burning hair;
He has an eye
For the lusciously fair
Who passes by.
O lover, hide—
Who comes to plunder
Has the crafty stride
Of unheard thunder.
Quick—lest he snatch,
In his grave need,
And sift and match,
Then sow like seed
Your love's sweet grief
On the backward air,
With the rhyme and the leaf
And the maiden's hair.

SLOW DEATH

You need no other death than this
  Slow death that wears your heart away;
It is enough, the death that is
  Your every night, your every day.

It is enough, the sun that slants
  Across your breast, heavy as steel,
Leaving the rust of radiance
  To shape a wound that will not heal.

Enough, the crystal at your lips,
  Wasting you even as it lies—
Vibrant there before it slips
  Away, torn from your mouth like cries.

There will be now, as fumes from wood,
  A passing, yet no new death's care.
You will know only the frustrate mood
  Of breath tarnished to color of air.

William Rose Benet

William Rose Benet was born at Fort Hamilton, New York Harbor, February 2, 1886. He was educated at Albany Academy and graduated from Yale in 1907. After various experiences as free-lance writer, publisher's reader, magazine editor and second lieutenant in the U. S. Air Service, Benet became the Associate Editor of the New York Post's *Literary Review* in 1920, resigning in 1924 to become one of the founders and editors of *The Saturday Review of Literature.*

The outstanding feature of Benet's verse is its extraordinary whimsicality; an Oriental imagination riots through his pages. Like the title-poem of his first volume, *Merchants from Cathay* (1913), all of Benet's volumes vibrate with a vigorous music; they are full of the sonorous stuff that one rolls out crossing wintry fields or tramping a road alone. If any living American deserves to be called a lyrical balladist, Benet is the man.

But Benet's charm is not confined to the lift and swing of rollicking choruses. His *The Falconer of God* (1914), *The Great White Wall* (1916) and *The Burglar of the Zodiac* (1918) contain decorations as bold as they are brilliant; they ring with a strange and spicy music evoked from seemingly casual words. His scope is wide, although he is most at home in fancies which

glow with a half-lurid, half-humorous reflection of the grotesque. There are times indeed when Benet seems to be forcing his ingenuity. The poet frequently lets his fantastic Pegasus run away with him, and what started out to be a gallop among the stars ends in a scraping of shins on the pavement. But he is saved by an acrobatic dexterity even when his energy betrays him.

Moons of Grandeur (1920) represents the fullest development of Benet's unusual gifts; a combination of Eastern phantasy and Western vigor. Even more arresting are those poems which have appeared in magazines subsequent to this volume. A firmer line, a cooler condensation distinguish the most recent verses, of which "Whale" is a particularly brilliant example.

MERCHANTS FROM CATHAY

How that They came.

Their heels slapped their bumping mules; their fat chaps glowed.
Glory unto Mary, each seemed to wear a crown!
Like sunset their robes were on the wide, white road:
So we saw those mad merchants come dusting into town!

Of their Beasts,

Two paunchy beasts they rode on and two they drove before.
May the Saints all help us, the tiger-stripes they had!
And the panniers upon them swelled full of stuffs and ore!
The square buzzed and jostled at a sight so mad.

And their Boast,

They bawled in their beards, and their turbans they wried.
They stopped by the stalls with curvetting and clatter.

As bronze as the bracken their necks and faces dyed—
And a stave they sat singing, to tell us of the matter.

With its Burthen

"For your silks, to Sugarmago! For your dyes, to Isfahan!
Weird fruits from the Isle o' Lamaree.
But for magic merchandise,
For treasure-trove and spice,
Here's a catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan,
The King of all the Kings across the sea!

And Chorus.

"Here's a catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan;
For we won through the deserts to his sunset barbican;
And the mountains of his palace no Titan's reach may span
Where he wields his seignorie!

A first Stave Fearsome,

"Red-as-blood skins of Panthers, so bright against the sun
On the walls of the halls where his pillared state is set
They daze with a blaze no man may look upon.
And with conduits of beverage those floors run wet.

And a second Right hard To stomach

"His wives stiff with riches, they sit before him there.
Bird and beast at his feast make song and clapping cheer.

And jugglers and enchanters, all walking on the air,
Make fall eclipse and thunder—make moons and suns appear!

And a third, Which is a Laughable Thing.

"Once the Chan, by his enemies sore-prest, and sorely spent,
Lay, so they say, in a thicket 'neath a tree
Where the howl of an owl vexed his foes from their intent:
Then that fowl for a holy bird of reverence made he!

We gape to Hear them end,

"A catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan!
Pastmasters of disasters, our desert caravan
Won through all peril to his sunset barbican,
Where he wields his seignorie!
And crowns he gave us! We end where we began:
A catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan,
The King of all the Kings across the sea!"

And are in Terror,

Those mad, antic Merchants! . . . Their stripèd beasts did beat
The market-square suddenly with hooves of beaten gold!
The ground yawned gaping and flamed beneath our feet!
They plunged to Pits Abysmal with their wealth untold!

And dread it is Devil's Work!

And some say the Chan himself in anger dealt the stroke—
For sharing of his secrets with silly, common folk:
But Holy, Blessed Mary, preserve us as you may
Lest once more those mad Merchants come chanting from Cathay!

NIGHT [1]

Let the night keep
What the night takes,
Sighs buried deep,
Ancient heart-aches,
Groans of the lover,
Tears of the lost;
Let day discover not
All the night cost!

Let the night keep
Love's burning bliss,
Drowned in deep sleep
Whisper and kiss,
Thoughts like white flowers
In hedges of May;
Let such deep hours not
Fade with the day!

Monarch is night
Of all eldest things,
Pain and affright,
Rapturous wings;

[1] From *Moons of Grandeur* by William Rose Benet. Copyright, 1920, George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

Night the crown, night the sword
Lifted to smite.
Kneel to your overlord,
Children of night!

HOW TO CATCH UNICORNS

Its cloven hoofprint on the sand
Will lead you—where?
Into a phantasmagoric land—
Beware!

There all the bright streams run up-hill.
The birds on every tree are still.
But from stocks and stones, clear voices come
That should be dumb.

If you have taken along a net,
A noose, a prod,
You'll be waiting in the forest yet . . .
Nid—nod!

In a virgin's lap the beast slept sound,
They say . . . but I—
I think (Is any one around?)
That's just a lie!

If you have taken a musketoon
To flinders 'twill flash 'neath the wizard moon.
So I should take browned batter-cake,
Hot-buttered inside, like foam to flake.

And I should take an easy heart
And a whimsical face,
And a tied-up lunch of sandwich and tart,
And spread a cloth in the open chase.

And then I should pretend to snore . . .

And I'd hear a snort and I'd hear a roar,
The wind of a mane and a tail, and four
Wild hoofs prancing the forest-floor.

And I'd open my eyes on a flashing horn—
And see the Unicorn!

Paladins fierce and virgins sweet . . .
But he's never had anything to eat!
Knights have tramped in their iron-mong'ry . . .
But nobody thought—that's all!—*he's hungry!*

ADDENDUM

Really hungry! Good Lord, deliver us,
The Unicorn is not *carnivorous!*

THE FAWN IN THE SNOW

The brown-dappled fawn
Bereft of the doe
Shivers in blue shadow
Of the glaring snow,

His whole world bright
As a jewel, and hard,
Diamond white,
Turquoise barred.

The trees are black,
Their needles gold,
Their boughs crack
In the keen cold.

The brown-dappled fawn
Bereft of the doe
Trembles and shudders
At the bright snow.

The air whets
The warm throat,
The frost frets
At the smooth coat.

Brown agate eyes
Opened round
Agonize
At the cold ground,

At the cold heaven
Enamelled pale,
At the earth shriven
By the snowy gale,

At magic glitter
Burning to blind,
At beauty bitter
As an almond rind.

Fawn, fawn,
Seek for your south,
For kind dawn
With her cool mouth,

For green sod
With gold and blue
Dappled, as God
Has dappled you,

For slumbrous ease,
Firm turf to run
Through fruited trees
Into full sun!

The shivering fawn
Paws at the snow.
South and dawn
Lie below;

Richness and mirth,
Dearth forgiven,
A happy earth,
A warm heaven.

The sleet streams,
The snow flies;
The fawn dreams
With wide brown eyes.

WHALE

Rain, with a silver flail;
Sun, with a golden ball;
Ocean, wherein the whale
Swims minnow-small;

I heard the whale rejoice
And cynic sharks attend;
He cried with a purple voice,
"The Lord is my Friend!"

"With flanged and battering tail,
With huge and dark baleen,
He said, 'Let there be Whale
In the Cold and Green!'

"He gave me a water spout,
A side like a harbor wall;
The Lord from cloud looked out
And planned it all.

"With glittering crown atilt
He leaned on a glittering rail;
He said, 'Where Sky is spilt,
Let there be Whale.'

"Tier upon tier of wings
Blushed and blanched and bowed;
Phalanxed fiery things
Cried in the cloud;

"Million-eyed was the mirk
At the plan not understood;
But the Lord looked on his work
And saw it was good.

"He gave me marvelous girth
For the curve of back and breast,
And a tiny eye of mirth
To hide His jest.

"He made me a floating hill,
A plunging deep-sea mine.
This was the Lord's will;
The Lord is Divine.

"I magnify his name
In earthquake and eclipse,
In weltering molten flame
And wrecks of ships,

"In waves that lick the moon;
I, the plough of the sea!
I am the Lord's boon;
The Lord made me!"

The sharks barked from beneath,
As the whale rollicked and roared,
"Yes, and our grinning teeth,
Was it not the Lord?"

Then question pattered like hail
From fishes large and small.
"The Lord is mighty," said Whale,
"The Lord made all!

"His is a mammoth jest
Life may never betray;
He has laid it up in His breast
Till Judgment Day;

"But high when combers foam
And tower their last of all,
My power shall haul you home
Through Heaven wall.

"A trumpet then in the gates,
To the ramps a thundering drum,
I shall lead you where He waits
For His Whale to come.

"Where His cloudy seat is placed
On high in an empty dome,
I shall trail the Ocean abased
In chains of foam,

"Unwieldy, squattering dread.
Where the blazing cohorts stand
At last I shall lift my head
As it feels His hand.

"Then wings with a million eyes
Before mine eyes shall quail:
'Look you, all Paradise,
I was His Whale!' "

I heard the Whale rejoice,
As he splayed the waves to a fan;
"And the Lord shall say with His Voice,
'Leviathan!'

"The Lord shall say with His Tongue,
'Now let all Heaven give hail
To my Jest when I was young,
To my very Whale.'"

Then the Whale careered in the Sea,
He floundered with flailing tail;
Flourished and rollicked he,
"Aha! Mine Empery!
For the Lord said, 'Let Whale Be!'
And there Was Whale!"

John Hall Wheelock

John Hall Wheelock was born at Far Rockaway, Long Island, in 1886. He was graduated from Harvard, receiving his B.A. in 1908, and finished his studies at the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin, 1908-10.

Wheelock's first book is, in many respects, his best. *The Human Fantasy* (1911) sings with the voice of youth—a youth which is vibrantly, even vociferously, in love with existence. Rhapsodic and obviously influenced by Whitman and Henley, these lines beat bravely; a singing buoyance arrests one upon opening the volume. A headlong ecstasy rises from pages whose refrain is "Splendid it is to live and glorious to die." *The Beloved Adventure* (1912) is less powerful, but scarcely less passionate. Lyric after lyric moves one by its athletic music and spiritual intensity.

Wheelock's subsequent volumes are less individualized. *Love and Liberation* (1913) and *Dust and Light* (1919) are long dilutions of the earlier strain. The music is still here, but most of the magic has gone. Wheelock has allowed himself to be exploited by his own fluency, and the result is mere lyrical monotony. Yet even vast stretches of two hundred and thirty unvaried love-songs cannot bury a dozen or more vivid poems which lie, half-concealed, in a waste of verbiage. "Earth," from the latter volume, reminiscent of Edna St. Vincent Millay's ecstasy on the same theme, has its own accents of wonder and proves that Wheelock was no chance comet burnt up in his youthful fires.

The Black Panther (1922) furnishes additional proof that though Wheelock's star may have waned it did not die. In this volume the poet's gift has assumed a greater dignity; the flashing athleticism has matured into a steady fervor, the passionate exulting has grown into an exaltation of passion. Almost every poem, with the exception of a few innocuous songs, reveals a graver music than Wheelock has ever accomplished. The mystic rises above his own romantic rhetoric. In the longer poems he expresses the paradox of conflict and consent: the philosophy of the single Consciousness which reconciles terror and tenderness, murder and laughter, dawn and destruction—"Life, the dreadful, the magnificent."

SUNDAY EVENING IN THE COMMON

Look—on the topmost branches of the world
  The blossoms of the myriad stars are thick;
  Over the huddled rows of stone and brick,
A few, sad wisps of empty smoke are curled
  Like ghosts, languid and sick.

One breathless moment now the city's moaning
  Fades, and the endless streets seem vague and dim;
  There is no sound around the whole world's rim,
Save in the distance a small band is droning
  Some desolate old hymn.

Van Wyck, how often have we been together
  When this same moment made all mysteries clear;
  —The infinite stars that brood above us here,
And the gray city in the soft June weather,
  So tawdry and so dear!

TRIUMPH OF LOVE

I shake my hair in the wind of morning
  For the joy within me that knows no bounds,
I echo backward the vibrant beauty
  Wherewith heaven's hollow lute resounds.

I shed my song on the feet of all men,
  On the feet of all shed out like wine,
On the whole and the hurt I shed my bounty,
  The beauty within me that is not mine.

Turn not away from my song, nor scorn me,
  Who bear the secret that holds the sky
And the stars together, but know within me
  There speaks another more wise than I.

Nor spurn me here from your heart, to hate me!
  Yet hate me here if you will—not so
Myself you hate, but the Love within me
  That loves you, whether you would or no.

Here love returns with love to the lover,
  And beauty unto the heart thereof,
And hatred unto the heart of the hater,
  Whether he would or no, with love!

NIRVANA

Sleep on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
  Over the stars that murmur as they go
  Lighting your lattice-window far below;
And every star some of the glory spells
  Whereof I know.

I have forgotten you long, long ago,
  Like the sweet silver singing of thin bells
Vanished, or music fading faint and low.
  Sleep on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Who loved you so.

LOVE AND LIBERATION

Lift your arms to the stars
And give an immortal shout;
Not all the veils of darkness
Can put your beauty out!

You are armed with love, with love,
Nor all the powers of Fate
Can touch you with a spear,
Nor all the hands of hate.

What of good and evil,
Hell and Heaven above—
Trample them with love!
Ride over them with love!

EARTH

Grasshopper, your fairy song
And my poem alike belong
To the dark and silent earth
From which all poetry has birth;
All we say and all we sing
Is but as the murmuring
Of that drowsy heart of hers
When from her deep dream she stirs:
If we sorrow, or rejoice,
You and I are but her voice.

Deftly does the dust express
In mind her hidden loveliness,
And from her cool silence stream
The cricket's cry and Dante's dream;
For the earth that breeds the trees
Breeds cities too, and symphonies.

Equally her beauty flows
Into a savior, or a rose—
Looks down in dream, and from above
Smiles at herself in Jesus' love.
Christ's love and Homer's art
Are but the workings of her heart;
Through Leonardo's hand she seeks
Herself, and through Beethoven speaks
In holy thunderings around
The awful message of the ground.

The serene and humble mold
Does in herself all selves enfold—
Kingdoms, destinies, and creeds,
Great dreams, and dauntless deeds,
Science that metes the firmament,
The high, inflexible intent
Of one for many sacrificed—
Plato's brain, the heart of Christ;
All love, all legend, and all lore
Are in the dust forevermore.

Even as the growing grass,
Up from the soil religions pass,
And the field that bears the rye
Bears parables and prophecy.
Out of the earth the poem grows
Like the lily, or the rose;
And all man is, or yet may be,
Is but herself in agony
Toiling up the steep ascent
Toward the complete accomplishment
When all dust shall be, the whole
Universe, one conscious soul.

Yea, the quiet and cool sod
Bears in her breast the dream of God.

If you would know what earth is, scan
The intricate, proud heart of man,
Which is the earth articulate,
And learn how holy and how great,
How limitless and how profound
Is the nature of the ground—
How without terror or demur
We may entrust ourselves to her
When we are wearied out and lay
Our faces in the common clay.

For she is pity, she is love,
All wisdom, she, all thoughts that move
About her everlasting breast
Till she gathers them to rest:
All tenderness of all the ages,
Seraphic secrets of the sages,
Vision and hope of all the seers,
All prayer, all anguish, and all tears
Are but the dust that from her dream
Awakes, and knows herself supreme—
Are but earth, when she reveals
All that her secret heart conceals
Down in the dark and silent loam,
Which is ourselves, asleep, at home.

Yea, and this, my poem, too,
Is part of her as dust and dew,
Wherein herself she doth declare
Through my lips, and say her prayer.

THIS QUIET DUST

Here in my curving hands I cup
This quiet dust; I lift it up.

Here is the mother of all thought;
Of this the shining heavens are wrought,
The laughing lips, the feet that rove,
The face, the body, that you love:
Mere dust, no more, yet nothing less,
And this has suffered consciousness,
Passion, and terror, this again
Shall suffer passion, death, and pain.

For, as all flesh must die, so all,
Now dust, shall live. 'Tis natural;
Yet hardly do I understand—
Here in the hollow of my hand
A bit of God Himself I keep,
Between two vigils fallen asleep.

Joyce Kilmer

(Alfred) Joyce Kilmer was born at New Brunswick, New Jersey, December 6, 1886. He was graduated from Rutgers College in 1904 and received his A.B. from Columbia in 1906. After leaving Columbia he became, in rapid succession, instructor of Latin at Morristown High School, editor of a journal for horsemen, book salesman, book-reviewer, lexicographer, æsthete, interviewer, socialist and churchman.

After Kilmer became converted to Catholicism his conception of the church was the Church Militant. "His thought," writes his biographer, Robert Cortes Holliday, "dwelt continually on warrior-saints. . . . As he saw it, there was no question as to his duty." In 1917 Kilmer joined the Officers' Reserve Training Corps, but he soon resigned from this. In less than three weeks after America entered the World War, he enlisted as a private in the Seventh Regiment, National Guard, New York. Shortly before the regiment left New York for Spartanburg, South Carolina, Kilmer was transferred at his own request to the 165th Infantry. In spite of his avowed militancy, Kilmer was "a poet trying to be a soldier"; he made no effort to glorify war; his one hope was to wring some spiritual satisfaction out of the brutality.

On July 28, 1918, the five-day battle for the mastery of the heights beyond the river Ourcq was begun. Two days later Sergeant Kilmer was killed in action.

Death came before the poet had developed or even matured his gifts. His first volume, *Summer of Love* (1911), is wholly imitative; it is full of reflections of a dozen other sources, "a broken bundle of mirrors." *Trees and Other Poems* (1914) contains the title-poem by which Kilmer is best known and, though various influences are still strong (one cannot miss the borrowed accents of Patmore, Belloc, Chesterton, Housman and—*vide* "Martin"—E. A. Robinson), a refreshing candor lights up the lines. *Main Street and Other Poems* (1917) is less derivative; the simplicity is at least less self-conscious.

Besides his own poetry, Kilmer edited a selection of *Verses* by Hilaire Belloc (1916) and *Dreams and Images,* an anthology of Catholic poets (1917).

TREES [1]

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

[1] From *Trees and Other Poems* by Joyce Kilmer. Copyright, 1914, by George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

MARTIN [1]

When I am tired of earnest men,
Intense and keen and sharp and clever,
Pursuing fame with brush or pen
Or counting metal disks forever,
Then from the halls of shadowland
Beyond the trackless purple sea
Old Martin's ghost comes back to stand
Beside my desk and talk to me.

Still on his delicate pale face
A quizzical thin smile is showing,
His cheeks are wrinkled like fine lace,
His kind blue eyes are gay and glowing.
He wears a brilliant-hued cravat,
A suit to match his soft gray hair,
A rakish stick, a knowing hat,
A manner blithe and debonair.

How good that he who always knew
That being lovely was a duty,
Should have gold halls to wander through
And should himself inhabit beauty.
How like his old unselfish way
To leave those halls of splendid mirth
And comfort those condemned to stay
Upon the bleak and sombre earth.

Some people ask: What cruel chance
Made Martin's life so sad a story?
Martin? Why, he exhaled romance
And wore an overcoat of glory.

[1] From *Trees and Other Poems* by Joyce Kilmer. Copyright, 1914, by George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

A fleck of sunlight in the street,
  A horse, a book, a girl who smiled,—
Such visions made each moment sweet
  For this receptive, ancient child.

Because it was old Martin's lot
  To be, not make, a decoration,
Shall we then scorn him, having not
  His genius of appreciation?
Rich joy and love he got and gave;
  His heart was merry as his dress.
Pile laurel wreaths upon his grave
  Who did not gain, but was, success.

Shaemas O Sheel

Shaemas O Sheel (Shields) was born September 19, 1886, in New York City. After graduating from high school, he revived the ancient Gaelic form of his family name and identified himself with the cause of Ireland in America.

O Sheel's two volumes, *The Blossomy Bough* (1911) and *The Light Feet of Goats* (1915), owe their chief impetus to the Celtic renascence and to W. B. Yeats in particular. But O Sheel's poetry, although influenced, is not merely derivative. His ancestry speaks through him with unmistakable accents; he is typically the Irish bard of whom Chesterton has written:

For the great Gaels of Ireland
  Are the men that God made mad;
For all their wars are merry
  And all their songs are sad.

A recurring if sometimes too determined mysticism and a muffled heroism individualize the best of his work.

THEY WENT FORTH TO BATTLE, BUT THEY ALWAYS FELL

They went forth to battle, but they always fell;
  Their eyes were fixed above the sullen shields;
Nobly they fought and bravely, but not well,
And sank heart-wounded by a subtle spell.
  They knew not fear that to the foeman yields,
  They were not weak, as one who vainly wields
A futile weapon; yet the sad scrolls tell
How on the hard-fought field they always fell.

It was a secret music that they heard,
  A sad sweet plea for pity and for peace;
And that which pierced the heart was but a word,
Though the white breast was red-lipped where the sword
  Pressed a fierce cruel kiss, to put surcease
  On its hot thirst, but drank a hot increase.
Ah, they by some strange troubling doubt were stirred,
And died for hearing what no foeman heard.

They went forth to battle, but they always fell;
  Their might was not the might of lifted spears;
Over the battle-clamor came a spell
Of troubling music, and they fought not well.
  Their wreaths are willows and their tribute, tears;
  Their names are old sad stories in men's ears;
Yet they will scatter the red hordes of Hell,
Who went to battle forth and always fell.

Roy Helton

Roy Helton was born at Washington, D. C., in 1886. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1908. He studied art —and found he was color-blind. He spent two years at inventions

—and found he had no business sense. After a few more experiments he became a schoolmaster in West Philadelphia.

Helton's first volume, *Youth's Pilgrimage* (1915), is a strange, mystical affair, full of vague symbolism with a few purple patches. *Outcasts in Beulah Land* (1918) is entirely different in theme and treatment. This is a much starker verse; a poetry of city streets, direct and sharp.

Since this volume Helton has become more intimately connected with primitive backgrounds, spending a great part of his time in the mountains of South Carolina and Kentucky. His recent verse shows the influence of this intimacy, a spirit which has crept into his fanciful prose, *The Early Adventures of Peacham Grew* (1925) being a story which unites quaintness and tragedy in one of the most delicate chronicles of boyhood ever written.

THE SONG OF DARK WATERS

I'se de niggah, I'se de niggah;
  I'se de niggah makes de works go round;
I'se a pullin', I'se a haulin'
  Wherever dere's a shovel in de ground.
You couldn' lif' de garbage in de old slop cart
  Withouten men lak me;
You couldn' run a vessel on de lakes or ribbahs;
  You couldn' put a steamah on de sea.
I'se a dirt and a black and a filth and a grime;
I'se a sweatin' and a laughin' and a gruntin' all de time,
  And dat's my way to be.

I'se de niggah, I'se de niggah;
I'se de niggah in de woodpile of de worl'.

Up dere in Heaven where de Lord am livin'
  Who laid dem streets of pearl?
De angels all ben ladies. De 'postles all ben gents;
Jes set and sing and twiddle dere wing
  And live at de Lord's expense.

Who raise dem walls of Shiloh?
Who pave dem streets of pearl?

Some old niggah. Some pore old niggah.
Some old niggah from de woodpile of de worl'.

David Morton

David Morton was born at Elkton, Kentucky, February 21, 1886. He graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1909, engaging in newspaper work immediately thereafter. After ten years of writing for various papers in the South, Morton came to New Jersey, where he lived, being teacher of English at Morristown High School, until 1924, when he went to teach at Amherst.

The greater part of Morton's work is in the sonnet form, bringing to it a certain vague charm which, after a few repetitions, becomes cloying. The best of his verses are to be found in his first volume, *Ships in Harbor and Other Poems* (1921).

Harvest (1924) proves that Morton has mastered his craft as a capable maker of sonnets. Unfortunately, it proves nothing more: the lines are smooth, fluently phrased, but with few individual images. There is a frail grace of thought, but absolutely no impact of personality, no reflection of experience. As has already been implied, it is evident that Morton has learned the technique of his favorite form. It is also evident that he has learned it entirely too well.

SYMBOLS

Beautiful words, like butterflies, blow by,
  With what swift colors on their fragile wings!—
Some that are less articulate than a sigh,
  Some that were names of ancient, lovely things.
What delicate careerings of escape,
  When they would pass beyond the baffled reach,
To leave a haunting shadow and a shape,
  Eluding still the careful traps of speech.

And I who watch and listen, lie in wait,
  Seeing the cloudy cavalcades blow past,
Happy if some bright vagrant, soon or late,
  May venture near the snares of sound, at last—
Most fortunate captor if, from time to time,
One may be taken, trembling, in a rhyme.

OLD SHIPS

There is a memory stays upon old ships,
  A weightless cargo in the musty hold,—
Of bright lagoons and prow-caressing lips,
  Of stormy midnights,—and a tale untold.
They have remembered islands in the dawn,
  And windy capes that tried their slender spars,
And tortuous channels where their keels have gone,
  And calm blue nights of stillness and the stars.

Ah, never think that ships forget a shore,
  Or bitter seas, or winds that made them wise;
There is a dream upon them, evermore;
  And there be some who say that sunk ships rise
To seek familiar harbors in the night,
Blowing in mists, their spectral sails like light.

Orrick Johns

Orrick Johns was born at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1887. He schooled himself to be an advertising copy writer, his creative work being kept as an avocation.

Asphalt and Other Poems (1917) is a queer mixture. Cheap stanzas crowd against lines of singular beauty; poor dialect verse elbows lyrics that sing without a false note. The same incongruity is evident in *Black Branches* (1920), where much that is strained and artificial mingles with poetry that is not only spontaneous but

searching. At his best, notably in the refreshing "Country Rhymes," Johns is a true singer, a lyricist of no small stature.

Although Johns' long poem "Second Avenue" won the first prize offered by the editor of *The Lyric Year* (1912), the anthology which first brought to light Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Renascence," his recent and more representative work is entirely in the short lyrical measure. Such songs as "The Interpreter," "Little Things" and "Wild Plum" will not be forgotten quickly.

THE INTERPRETER

In the very early morning when the light was low
She got all together and she went like snow,
Like snow in the springtime on a sunny hill,
And we were only frightened and can't think still.

We can't think quite that the katydids and frogs
And the little crying chickens and the little grunting hogs,
And the other living things that she spoke for to us
Have nothing more to tell her since it happened thus.

She never is around for any one to touch,
But of ecstasy and longing she too knew much . . .
And always when any one has time to call his own
She will come and be beside him as quiet as a stone.

LITTLE THINGS

There's nothing very beautiful and nothing very gay
About the rush of faces in the town by day;
But a light tan cow in a pale green mead,
That is very beautiful, beautiful indeed . . .
And the soft March wind and the low March mist
Are better than kisses in a dark street kissed . . .
The fragrance of the forest when it wakes at dawn,
The fragrance of a trim green village lawn,

The hearing of the murmur of the rain at play—
These things are beautiful, beautiful as day!
And I shan't stand waiting for love or scorn
When the feast is laid for a day new-born . . .
Oh, better let the little things I loved when little
Return when the heart finds the great things brittle;
And better is a temple made of bark and thong
Than a tall stone temple that may stand too long.

DILEMMA

What though the moon should come
  With a blinding glow,
And the stars have a game
  On the wood's edge. . . .
A man would have to still
  Cut and weed and sow,
And lay a white line
  When he plants a hedge.

What though God
  With a great sound of rain
Came to talk of violets
  And things people do. . . .
I would have to labour
  And dig with my brain
Still to get a truth
  Out of all words new.

WILD PLUM

They are unholy who are born
  To love wild plum at night,
Who once have passed it on a road
  Glimmering and white.

It is as though the darkness had
Speech of silver words,
Or as though a cloud of stars
Perched like ghostly birds.

They are unpitied from their birth
And homeless in men's sight,
Who love, better than the earth,
Wild plum at night.

Marianne Moore

Marianne Moore was born in St. Louis, Missouri, November 15, 1887. She received her B.A. from Bryn Mawr College in 1909; taught stenography at the United States Indian school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, from 1911 to 1915; and has been an assistant in the Hudson Park Branch of the New York Public Library since 1919.

Her verse was first published in *The Egoist* (London) in 1915 and, although her unusual lines attracted immediate attention, an inherent reticence kept her from submitting a collection to any publisher. It was not until 1921 that a few of her friends felt it incumbent upon themselves to "pirate" her work and so, without her coöperation, *Poems* was published in that year by *The Egoist Press.* Three years later (in December, 1924), she received the Dial Award of two thousand dollars for "distinguished service to American letters." Her *Observations,* a volume including the earlier poems as well as the more recent ones, appeared at the same time.

Miss Moore's work is frankly puzzling, not only to the disinterested reader, but to the avowed student of modern poetry. Although her early verses present no difficulties, her more characteristic lines seem to erect a barrier of jagged clauses, barbed quotations, and suspicious structures between herself and her audience. It has been asserted, and the editor shares this opinion, that Miss Moore's highly intellectualized dissertations are actually part of the domain of criticism rather than of poetry, and that her creations are in the latter division chiefly because of the physical pat-

tern of her lines. Her studies are usually scornful and always sophisticated, varying between statements which seem to be seeking their prose origins and an abstract intellectual dexterity: a sort of witty and ironic geometry. Her witticisms are in a new *genre* and her observations are both precise and fantastic—she sees zebras "supreme in their abnormality," elephants "with their fog-colored skins."

Whether or not Miss Moore's essays are actually poetry—a matter which cannot be determined until that indefinable term itself is defined—there can be no doubt about the incision of her ideas and the bite of her language. Hers is never, not even in her most eccentric designs, a loose structure of fortuitous phrases; her expression is continually as clenched and controlled as her thought.

A TALISMAN

Under a splintered mast,
torn from the ship and cast
near her hull,

a stumbling shepherd found,
embedded in the ground,
a sea-gull

of lapis lazuli,
a scarab of the sea,
with wings spread—

curling its coral feet,
parting its beak to greet
men long dead.

THAT HARP YOU PLAY SO WELL

O David, if I had
Your power, I should be glad—
In harping, with the sling,
In patient reasoning!

Blake, Homer, Job, and you,
Have made old wine-skins new.
Your energies have wrought
Stout continents of thought.

But, David, if the heart
Be brass, what boots the art
Of exorcising wrong,
Of harping to a song?

The sceptre and the ring
And every royal thing
Will fail. Grief's lustiness
Must cure the harp's distress.

TO A STEAM ROLLER

The illustration
is nothing to you without the application.
You lack half wit. You crush all the particles down
into close conformity, and then walk back and forth on
them.

Sparkling chips of rock
are crushed down to the level of the parent block.
Were not "impersonal judgment in æsthetic
matters, a metaphysical impossibility," you

might fairly achieve
it. As for butterflies, I can hardly conceive
of one's attending upon you, but to question
the congruence of the complement is vain, if it exists.

ENGLAND

with its baby rivers and little towns, each with its abbey or
its cathedral;
with voices—one voice perhaps, echoing through the tran-
sept—the
criterion of suitability and convenience: and Italy with its
equal
shores—contriving an epicureanism from which the gross-
ness has been

extracted: and Greece with its goats and its gourds, the nest
of modified illusions:
and France, the "chrysalis of the nocturnal butterfly" in
whose products, mystery of construction diverts one from
what was originally one's
object—substance at the core: and the East with its snails,
its emotional

shorthand and jade cockroaches, its rock crystal and its im-
perturbability,
all of museum quality; and America where there
is the little old ramshackle victoria in the south, where cigars
are smoked on the
street in the north; where there are no proof readers, no
silkworms, no digressions;

the wild man's land; grass-less, links-less, language-less coun-
try—in which letters are written
not in Spanish, not in Greek, not in Latin, not in short-
hand,
but in plain American which cats and dogs can read! The
letter "a" in psalm and calm when
pronounced with the sound of "a" in candle, is very notice-
able but

why should continents of misapprehension have to be accounted for by the
fact? Does it follow that because there are poisonous toadstools
which resemble mushrooms, both are dangerous? In the case of mettlesomeness which may be
mistaken for appetite, of heat which may appear to be haste, no con-

clusions may be drawn. To have misapprehended the matter, is to have confessed
that one has not looked far enough. The sublimated wisdom
of China, Egyptian discernment, the catacylsmic torrent of emotion compressed
in the verbs of the Hebrew language, the books of the man who is able

to say, "I envy nobody but him and him only, who catches more fish than
I do,"—the flower and fruit of all that noted superiority—should one not have stumbled upon it in America, must one imagine
that it is not there? It has never been confined to one locality.

Elinor Wylie

Elinor (Hoyt) Wylie was born in Somerville, New Jersey, but she is, she protests, completely a Pennsylvanian by inheritance. On both sides she can trace her ancestry back through old American families. A grandfather was Governor of Pennsylvania, her father was solicitor-general in Roosevelt's administration. Her girlhood was passed in Washington, D. C. After girlhood, she travelled and lived abroad, thought of being a painter (like her brother, Henry Martyn Hoyt, a young artist of unusual promise,

who died in 1920), and published her first tentative collection of verse. This tiny blue-gray volume of forty-three pages was issued anonymously ten years before her public début and has been for a long time out of print. In 1921 *Nets to Catch the Wind* was published and Mrs. Wylie's name was suddenly spread throughout the country. She was married to William Rose Benet in 1924.

Nets to Catch the Wind is one of the most brilliant first volumes published in the last twenty years. This brilliance is one which, at first, seems to sparkle without burning. In several of the poems the author achieves a frigid ecstasy; emotion is never absent from her lines, but too frequently it seems a passion frozen at its source. It is the brilliance of moonlight coruscating on a plain of ice. But if Mrs. Wylie seldom allows her verses to become heated, she never permits them to remain dull. As a technician, she is always admirable; as in "The Eagle and the Mole," she can even lift didacticism to a breathless level. Her auditory effects are scarcely less remarkable; never has snow-silence been so unerringly communicated as in "Velvet Shoes."

Black Armour (1923) exhibits Mrs. Wylie's dramatic keenness against a mellower background. The beauty evoked in this volume no longer has "the hard heart of a child." As the intellect has grown more fiery, the mood has grown warmer while the craftsmanship is more dazzling than ever. This devotee of severe elegance has perfected an accent which is both brusque and patrician; she varies the perfect modulation with rhymes that are delightfully acrid and departures which never fail of unique success. Mrs. Wylie, it is evident, has read the metaphysicians; Donne, Webster and, to make a great leap, Eliot find a voice in her lines. She feels

> "behind a carnal mesh,
> The clean bones crying in the flesh."

Possibly the most arresting feature of her work is the variety of her gifts. She can turn from the nimble dexterity of a rondo like "Peregrine" to the introspective poignance of "Self Portrait," from the fanciful "Escape" to the grave nobility of "Confession of Faith."

Her prose is scarcely less distinguished. *Jennifer Lorn* (1923),

which Mrs. Wylie has subtitled "A Sedate Extravaganza," and *The Venetian Glass Nephew* (1925) juggle a harlequin style adroitly. Here is a deft artifice and an iridescent language that could only spring from an unusually "jewelled brain."

Mrs. Wylie's most recent verse (in particular her group in the *American Miscellany—1925*) surpasses the expectations of her most ardent admirers. It is a reasoned enthusiasm which leads the editor to consider "Confession of Faith" an imperishable lyric and to believe that "Peter and John" is, both from a standpoint of pictorial vigor and technical perfection, one of the few great portrait-poems of this or the previous generation. With such a mastery Mrs. Wylie need no longer fear to "live by squeezing from a stone the little nourishment I get"; she can wait the verdict of posterity, certain that her work "preserves a shape utterly its own."

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source,
And disembodied bones.

MADMAN'S SONG

Better to see your cheek grown hollow,
Better to see your temple worn,
Than to forget to follow, follow,
After the sound of a silver horn.

Better to bind your brow with willow
And follow, follow until you die,
Than to sleep with your head on a golden pillow,
Nor lift it up when the hunt goes by.

Better to see your cheek grown sallow
And your hair grown gray, so soon, so soon,
Than to forget to hallo, hallo,
After the milk-white hounds of the moon.

SANCTUARY

This is the bricklayer; hear the thud
Of his heavy load dumped down on stone.
His lustrous bricks are brighter than blood,
His smoking mortar whiter than bone.

Set each sharp-edged, fire-bitten brick
Straight by the plumb-line's shivering length;
Make my marvelous wall so thick
Dead nor living may shake its strength.

Full as a crystal cup with drink
Is my cell with dreams, and quiet, and cool. . . .
Stop, old man! You must leave a chink;
How can I breathe? *You can't, you fool!*

VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow
  In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
  At a tranquil pace,
  Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
  And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
  More beautiful
  Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
  In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
  Upon silver fleece,
  Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
  Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
  On white silence below.
  We shall walk in the snow.

ESCAPE

When foxes eat the last gold grape,
And the last white antelope is killed,
I shall stop fighting and escape
Into a little house I'll build.

But first I'll shrink to fairy size,
With a whisper no one understands,
Making blind moons of all your eyes,
And muddy roads of all your hands.

And you may grope for me in vain
In hollows under the mangrove root,
Or where, in apple-scented rain,
The silver wasp-nests hang like fruit.

GOLDEN BOUGH

These lovely groves of fountain-trees that shake
A burning spray against autumnal cool,
Descend again in molten drops to make
The rutted path a river and a pool.

They rise in silence, fall in quietude,
Lie still as looking-glass to every sense;
Only their lion-color in the wood
Roars to miraculous heat and turbulence.

AUGUST

Why should this Negro insolently stride
Down the red noonday on such noiseless feet?
Piled in his barrow, tawnier than wheat,
Lie heaps of smoldering daisies, somber-eyed,

Their copper petals shriveled up with pride,
Hot with a superfluity of heat,
Like a great brazier borne along the street
By captive leopards, black and burning pied.

Are there no water-lilies, smooth as cream,
With long stems dripping crystal? Are there none
Like those white lilies, luminous and cool,
Plucked from some hemlock-darkened northern stream
By fair-haired swimmers, diving where the sun
Scarce warms the surface of the deepest pool?

CONFESSION OF FAITH

I lack the braver mind
That dares to find
The lover friend, and kind.

I fear him to the bone;
I lie alone
By the beloved one,

And, breathless for suspense,
Erect defense
Against love's violence

Whose silences portend
A bloody end
For lover never friend.

But, in default of faith,
In futile breath,
I dream no ill of Death.

PETER AND JOHN

Twelve good friends
Walked under the leaves
Binding the ends
Of the barley sheaves.

Peter and John
Lay down to sleep
Pillowed upon
A haymaker's heap.

John and Peter
Lay down to dream.
The air was sweeter
Than honey and cream.

Peter was bred
In the salty cold.
His hair was red
And his eyes were gold.

John had a mouth
Like a wing bent down.
His brow was smooth
And his eyes were brown.

Peter to slumber
Sank like a stone,
Of all their number
The bravest one.

John more slowly
Composed himself,
Young and holy
Among the Twelve.

John as he slept
Cried out in grief,
Turned and wept
On the golden leaf:

"Peter, Peter,
Stretch me your hand
Across the glitter
Of the harvest land!

"Peter, Peter,
Give me a sign!
This was a bitter
Dream of mine,—

"Bitter as aloes
It parched my tongue.
Upon the gallows
My life was hung.

"Sharp it seemed
As a bloody sword.
Peter, I dreamed
I was Christ the Lord!"

Peter turned
To holy Saint John:
His body burned
In the falling sun.

In the falling sun
He burned like flame:
"John, Saint John,
I have dreamed the same!

"My bones were hung
On an elder tree;
Bells were rung
Over Galilee.

"A silver penny
Sealed each of my eyes.
Many and many
A cock crew thrice."

When Peter's word
Was spoken and done,
"Were you Christ the Lord
In your dream?" said John.

"No," said the other,
"That I was not.
I was our brother
Iscariot."

T. S. Eliot

T. S. (Thomas Stearns) Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888. He received his A.B. at Harvard in 1909 and his A.M. in 1910. Subsequently, he studied at the Sorbonne and at Merton College, Oxford, becoming a teacher and lecturer in London, where he has lived (although he no longer teaches) since 1914. He was, for a while, assistant editor of *The Egoist* and is at present one of the leading spirits of *The Criterion,* a magazine which he helped to found.

Prufrock appeared in England in 1917. An American edition, including a number of other verses, was published under the title *Poems* in 1920. It was hailed, reviled, applauded, misunderstood and imitated. There were indeed many imitators, particularly in England, where the younger men, rebounding from Georgian affectations, seized upon Eliot's disillusioned subtleties as a new gospel. Most of them patterned their lines upon the now famous "Sweeney" model, and by 1922 Eliot was one of the most discussed and disputed of living American poets. This volume, *Poems,* contains two sharply differentiated though related idioms. The more arresting and, therefore, the more copied evocations are the impressionistic sets of quatrains that compose "Sweeney Among the

Nightingales," "Sweeney Erect," "The Hippopotamus" (that stinging whimsicality), "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service." It is a witty if recondite inflection which is heard beneath the muffled allusions; the edged lines crackle with observations as shrewd as "the snarled and yelping seas," "this oval O cropped out with teeth," "laughter tinkling among the teacups," "the damp souls of housemaids." Occasionally his wit takes on a darker intensity, as when, speaking of Donne's struggle to transcend the senses, he writes:

> He knew the anguish of the marrow,
> The ague of the skeleton;
> No contact possible to flesh
> Allayed the fever of the bone.

Broadly summarized, however, about half of the sixty-three pages of Eliot's *Poems* attains a level no higher than that of acrid epigrams, mordant and complicated *vers de société*. But there is another phase of Eliot, one that is disclosed in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "The Portrait of a Lady," and "La Figlia Che Piange," in which picture and music are surprisingly blended. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," written while Eliot was still at Harvard, is a minor masterpiece; nothing in recent poetry (if we forget Laforgue and the other French poets to whom Eliot is manifestly indebted), nothing in English at least, has communicated so great a sense of ambiguous hurt and general frustration. More condensed and equally precise in its hyperæsthetic delicacy is "The Portrait of a Lady," that analytical study of the feminine dilettante, the faded votary of dimly lit studios—a baffled *précieuse* diffusing small talk and boredom. In these poems as well as the succeeding one, Eliot becomes the laureate of nostalgia, of a dwindling and futile *Wehmut*.

The Waste Land (1922) is Eliot's attempt to sound this theme of disillusion-frustration on a large scale by combining or rather colliding his two styles. The publication of this forty-page poem caused an outburst so violent and prolonged that the echoes of the controversy are still in the air. On the one hand it was dismissed as "an impudent hoax," "filthy bedlam raving"; on the other it was exalted as "the greatest document of our day, showing the starvation of our entire civilization." Both estimates are, of course, absurd; *The Waste Land* is neither "erudite gibberish"

nor is it "a great work, with one triumph after another." It is, in essence, a set of mangled, difficult and (in spite of the arbitrary program of unification) separate failures and successes. If its pages are splintered with broken phrases and distorted pictures, one must remember that Eliot is attempting to portray disintegration itself. Its dependence on associations in other literatures makes it seem like an anthology of assimilations; its jumble of quotations (without inverted commas) from thirty-one sources gives the entire structure the look of a piece of literary carpentry done by a scholarly joiner. But certain passages are quick with poignance; several episodes are unforgettably etched. The actual invention is meagre; even the chords of despair are "thin." As Clive Bell wrote, "The despairing tone which pervades Eliot's poetry is not, it seems to me, so much the despair of disillusionment as the morbidity of *The Yellow Book.*" But, having quoted Bell to support my thesis, I should let him add, "But how the man can write! And the experience, if it be small, is perfectly digested and assimilated; it has gone into the blood and bones of his work. By his choice of words, by his forging of phrases, by his twisting, stretching and snapping of rhythms, Eliot can make out of his narrow vision things of perpetual beauty."

The "things of perpetual beauty" are few and far to seek in *The Waste Land,* but they are there. And, if the rare felicities are difficult to find, we must remember that much which was once considered ugly and unintelligible—one recalls Beethoven's symphonies, Whistler's canvases, Rodin's bronzes, Browning's monologues, Whitman's "barbaric yawp"—much which our grandparents considered heretical and outrageous has become part of the world's cultural tradition. To dislike Eliot's work because it is obscure is to admit an honest prejudice; to say that Eliot is a charlatan is to repeat the charge that Wagner wrote "Tristan and Isolde" merely to irritate the critics.

Besides his poetry, Eliot has published two books of essays: *The Sacred Wood* (1921) and *Homage to John Dryden* (1924), in both of which there is voluminous proof of his essential seriousness. Neither as piquant nor as stylized as his verse, marred by theories and conclusions that are often as fantastic as they are false, Eliot's criticism is always provocative because of its close-knit texture, for its refreshingly original analyses and, most of all, for the reflected integrity of the mind of its creator.

LA FIGLIA CHE PIANGE

O quam te memorem virgo . . .

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair—
Lean on a garden urn—
Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—
Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—
Fling them to the ground and turn
With a fugitive resentment in your eyes:
But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,
So I would have had her stand and grieve,
So he would have left
As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,
As the mind deserts the body it has used.

I should find
Some way incomparably light and deft,
Some way we both should understand,
Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather
Compelled my imagination many days,
Many days and many hours:
Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers,
And I wonder how they should have been together!
I should have lost a gesture and a pose.
Sometimes these cogitations still amaze
The troubled midnight and the noon's repose.

MORNING AT THE WINDOW

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,
And along the trampled edges of the street

I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids
Sprouting despondently at area gates.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
An aimless smile that hovers in the air
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

PRELUDE

The winter evening settles down
With smells of steaks in passageways.
Six o'clock.
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.
And now a gusty shower wraps
The grimy scraps
Of withered leaves about his feet
And newspapers from vacant lots;
The showers beat
On broken blinds and chimney pots,
And at the corner of the street
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.
And then the lighting of the lamps.

PORTRAIT OF A LADY[1]

I

Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon
You have the scene arrange itself—as it will seem to do—
With "I have saved this afternoon for you";
And four wax candles in the darkened room,
Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,
And atmosphere of Juliet's tomb
Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 370.

We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole
Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and finger-tips.
"So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul
Should be resurrected only among friends
Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom
That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room."
—And so the conversation slips
Among velleities and carefully caught regrets
Through attenuated tones of violins
Mingled with remote cornets
And begins.
"You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends,
And how, how rare and strange it is, to find
In a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends
(For indeed I do not love it . . . you knew? You are not
blind!
How keen you are!)
To find a friend who has these qualities,
Who has, and gives
Those qualities upon which friendship lives.
How much it means that I say this to you—
Without these friendships—life, what *cauchemar!*"
Among the windings of the violins
And the ariettes
Of cracked cornets
Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins
Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,
Capricious monotone
That is at least one definite "false note."
—Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,
Admire the monuments
Discuss the late events,
Correct our watches by the public clocks.
Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks.

II

Now that lilacs are in bloom
She has a bowl of lilacs in her room
And twists one in her fingers while she talks.
"Ah, my friend, you do not know, you do not know
What life is, you should hold it in your hands";
(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)
"You let it flow from you, you let it flow,
And youth is cruel, and has no remorse
And smiles at situations which it cannot see."

I smile, of course,
And go on drinking tea.
"Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall
My buried life, and Paris in the Spring,
I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world
To be wonderful and youthful, after all."

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune
Of a broken violin on an August afternoon:
"I am always sure that you understand
My feelings, always sure that you feel,
Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand.
You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.
You will go on, and when you have prevailed
You can say: at this point many a one has failed.

But what have I, but what have I, my friend,
To give you, what can you receive from me?
Only the friendship and the sympathy
Of one about to reach her journey's end.
I shall sit here, serving tea to friends. . . ."

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends
For what she has said to me?
You will see me any morning in the park

Reading the comics and the sporting page.
Particularly I remark
An English countess goes upon the stage.
A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,
Another bank defaulter has confessed.
I keep my countenance,
I remain self-possessed
Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired,
Reiterates some worn-out common song
With the smell of hyacinths across the garden,
Recalling things that other people have desired.
Are these ideas right or wrong?

III

The October night comes down; returning as before
Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease
I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door
And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees.

"And so you are going abroad; and when do you return?
But that's a useless question.
You hardly know when you are coming back;
You will find so much to learn."
My smile falls heavily among the bric-à-brac.

"Perhaps you can write to me."
My self-possession flares up for a second;
This is as I had reckoned.
"I have been wondering frequently of late
(But our beginnings never know our ends!)
Why we have not developed into friends."
I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark
Suddenly, his expression in a glass.
My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark.

"For everybody said so, all our friends,
They all were sure our feelings would relate

So closely! I myself can hardly understand.
We must leave it now to fate.
You will write, at any rate.
Perhaps it is not too late.
I shall sit here, serving tea to friends."

And I must borrow every changing shape
To find expression . . . dance, dance
Like a dancing bear,
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape. . . .
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance—
Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,
Afternoon grey and smoky, evening yellow and rose;
Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand
With the smoke coming down above the housetops;
Doubtful, for quite a while
Not knowing what to feel or if I understand
Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon . . .
Would she not have the advantage, after all?
This music is successful with a "dying fall"
Now that we talk of dying—
And should I have the right to smile?

CONVERSATION GALANTE

I observe: "Our sentimental friend, the moon!
Or possibly (fantastic, I confess)
It may be Prester John's balloon
Or an old battered lantern hung aloft
To light poor travellers to their distress."
She then: "How you digress!"

And I then: "Some one frames upon the keys
That exquisite nocturne, with which we explain
The night and moonshine; music which we seize
To body forth our vacuity."

She then: "Does this refer to me?"
"Oh, no, it is I who am inane.

"You, madam, are the eternal humorist,
The eternal enemy of the absolute,
Giving our vagrant moods the slightest twist!
With your aid indifferent and imperious
At a stroke our mad poetics to confute—"
And—"Are we then so serious?"

John Crowe Ransom

John Crowe Ransom was born in Pulaski, Tennessee, April 30, 1888, of Scotch-Irish descent. Pulaski, so Ransom informs me, is otherwise distinguished as being the County Seat of Giles County, the birthplace of Sam Davis, the Confederate martyr, and of the Ku Klux Klan—Ransom's own great-uncle taking part in the foundation of the latter. Ransom, the son of a local minister, was educated in his own state and abroad: he received his B.A. at Vanderbilt University in 1909, his B.A. at Oxford in 1923. At the latter he was Rhodes Scholar from Tennessee, taking the "Greats" (classical) course. He has taught at Vanderbilt since 1914, except for two years during which he was with the A. E. F. He was the chief instigator and one of the founders of *The Fugitive,* that bravely experimental journal which did much to disprove Mencken's contention that the "solid South" was a vast "Sahara of the Beaux Arts."

Poems About God appeared in 1919, a raw first book with a tang of bitter humor. Here was no southern gentleman's proverbial courtliness, no unctuous and mincing gallantry; here was a bristling acerbity blurted through a strong if uncertain utterance. The lines range from the roughly powerful (reminding one of a coarser Robert Frost) to the surprisingly banal. During the five-year interval between *Poems About God* and his next volume Ransom's poetry underwent an almost complete change. Little of the crudeness and still less of the foreign influence remain in *Chills and Fever,* by all odds the most distinguished volume of poetry published in 1924. Ransom, it is evident, reacts from the callow simplicities and the tradition of Wonder in words of one

syllable; his verse is definitely for mature minds willing not only to allow a mature poet his mixed modes but willing to follow them. It is, at first glance, a curiously involved speech which Ransom uses to clothe his semi-whimsical, semi-ironic philosophy. But beneath his prim and almost too precise circumlocutions one is made aware of an extraordinarily sensitive, keenly musical lyricist. What adds zest to his verses is the mocking gravity of his speech —a gravity which is sometimes exaggerated to the verge of parody.

Ransom strikes his note with a sureness that is almost defiant. He can spin fancies that are, at one time, whimsical and poignant; his account of a small boy's walk in deep woods ("First Travels of Max") is as fine a macabre piece as anything achieved by Amy Lowell. He can draw portraits of dream-lost mediocrities as sympathetically as Robinson ("Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son" is a second cousin to "Miniver Cheevy" and "Bewick Finzer"). He can sound the stuffed brasses in "Captain Carpenter," the muted violins in "Here Lies a Lady" and the prophetic trumpets in "Spiel of the Three Mountebanks" with equal precision. Such music, half soothing, half stinging, is new in our poetry; the modulations are strange, the cadences charming in their slight irregularities. Ransom knows how to employ the unresolved suspension; he delights in pairing such fresh rhymes as "drunkard-conquered," "little-scuttle," "ready-study." But it is not merely the free use of dissonance and assonance which distinguish his poems; it is what he does with these properties. "Antique Harvesters" breathes the very quixotic spirit of the old South and the Southron's devotion to it.

And yet, for all of Ransom's variety, in spite of his ability to play equally well in the spangles of harlequin and the graver habit of *Kapellmeister,* this Southerner will never be a popular poet. His is too elegant a speech to meet with general favor; his vocabulary is meticulous to the point of being over-elaborate, his utterance is so precise as to seem pedantic. The fact that a great part of this particularity is not affectation, but a scholar's gentle mockery, will not save him from the disapproval or, worse, the neglect of the public which dreads polysyllabic poets.

Nevertheless, even in a facile, overproductive age, there can be no doubt that these crisp narratives and cerebral lyrics will, in spite of their allusive idiom, find their niche. And it will be neither a mean nor a long neglected one. Ransom has already received

recognition beyond the borders of patriotic poetry societies. In 1924 the Hogarth Press (London) published *Grace After Meat,* a curious mixture of ten poems from *Poems About God* and the same number from *Chills and Fever.* It was sponsored by T. S. Eliot and introduced by Robert Graves, who ended his foreword by saying, "Ransom is doing for his own state what Frost has done for New England, Vachel Lindsay for his Middle-West, Carl Sandburg for Chicago. Such poets are the forerunners of a national American school that will one day produce a synthesis of all regional contributions." One does not have to agree with the English writer's prophecy to accord Ransom his distinct and autochthonous place.

SPIEL OF THE THREE MOUNTEBANKS

THE SWARTHY ONE—
Villagers who gather round,
This is Fides, my lean hound.
Bring your bristled village curs
To try his fang and tooth, sweet sirs:
He will rend them, he is savage,
Thinking nothing but to ravage,
Nor with cudgel, fire, rope,
May ye control my misanthrope;
He would tear the moon in the sky
And fly at Heaven, could he fly.
And for his ravening without cease
I have had of him no peace.
Only once I bared the knife
To quit my devil of his life,
But listen, how I heard him say,
"Think you I shall die to-day?
Since your mother cursed and died,
I am keeping at your side,
We are firmly knit together,
Two ends tugging at one tether,

And you shall see when I shall die
That you are mortal even as I."
Bring your stoutest-hearted curs
If ye would risk him, gentle sirs.

THE THICK ONE—
Countrymen, here's a noble frame,
Humphrey is my elephant's name.
When my father's back was bent
Under steep impediment,
Humphrey came to my possession,
With patient strength for all his passion.
Have ye a mountain to remove?
It is Humphrey's dearest love.
Pile his burden to the skies,
Loose a pestilence of flies,
Foot him in the quick morass
Where no laden beast can pass:
He will staunch his weariless back
And march unswerving on the track.
Have ye seen a back so wide,
Such impenetrable hide?
Nor think ye by this Humphrey hill
Prince Hamlet bare his fardels ill?
Myself I like it not for us
To wear beneath an incubus;
I take offence, but in no rage
May I dispose my heritage;
Though in good time the vast and tough
Shall sink and totter soon enough.
So pile your population up:
They are a drop in Humphrey's cup;
Add all your curses to his pack
To make one straw for Humphrey's back.

THE PALE ONE—
If ye remark how poor I am,
Come, citizens, behold my lamb!

Have ye a lion, ounce, or scourge,
Or any beast of dainty gorge?
Agnus lays his tender youth
Between the very enemy's mouth,
And though he sniff his delicate meat,
He may not bruise that flesh nor eat,
He may not rend him limb from limb,
If Agnus do but bleat on him.
Fierce was my youth, but like a dream
I saw a temple, and a stream,
And where I knelt and washed my sore,
This infant lamb stood on the shore,
He mounted with me from the river.
And still he cries, as brave as ever,
"Lay me down by the lion's side
To match my frailty with his pride;
Fain would I welter in my blood
To teach these lions true lionhood."
So daily Agnus would be slain
But daily is denied again,
And still the hungry lions range
While Agnus waits upon a change;
Only the coursing lions die
And in their deserts mortify.
So bring us lion, leopard, bear,
To try of Agnus without fear,
And ye less gentle than I am,
Come, be instructed of my Lamb.

HERE LIES A LADY

Here lies a lady of beauty and high degree.
Of chills and fever she died, of fever and chills,
The delight of her husband, her aunts, an infant of three,
And of medicos marvelling sweetly on her ills.

For either she burned, and her confident eyes would blaze,
And her fingers fly in a manner to puzzle their heads—
What was she making? Why, nothing; she sat in a maze
Of old scraps of laces, snipped into curious shreds—

Or this would pass, and the light of her fire decline
Till she lay discouraged and cold as a thin stalk white and
blown,
And would not open her eyes, to kisses, to wine.
The sixth of these states was her last; the cold settled down.

Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom, and toughly I hope ye may
thole,
But was she not lucky? In flowers and lace and mourning,
In love and great honour we bade God rest her soul
After six little spaces of chill, and six of burning.

FIRST TRAVELS OF MAX

As hath been, lo, these many generations,
The best of the Van Vroomans was the youngest;
And even he, in a chevroned sailor's blouse
And tawny curls far from subdued to the cap,
Had slapped old Katie and betaken himself
From games for children. That was because they told
Him never, never to set a wicked foot
Into Fool's Forest, where the devil dwelt.

"Become Saint Michael's sword!" said Max to the stick,
And to the stone, "Be a brand-new revolver!"
Then Max was glad that he had armed so wisely,
As darker grew the wood, and shrill with silence.
All good fairies were helpless here; at night
Whipped in an inch of their lives; weeping, forbidden
To play with strange scared truant little boys
Who didn't belong there. Snakes were allowed there
And lizards and adders—people of age and evil

That lay on their bellies and whispered—no bird nor rabbit.
There were more rotten trees than there were sound ones;
In that wood, timber was degenerate
And rotted almost faster than it grew.
There were no flowers nor apples; too much age.
The only innocent thing in there was Max,
And even he had cursed his little sisters.

The little black tarn rose up almost in his face—
It was as black and sudden as the pit
The Adversary digs in the bowels of earth;
Bubbles were on it, breath of the black beast
(Formed like a spider, white bag for entrails)
Who took that sort of blackness to inhabit
And dangle after bad men in Fool's Forest.
"Must they be bad?" said casuistical Max.
"Mightn't a good boy who stopped saying his prayers
Be allowed to slip into the spider's fingers?"
Max raised his sword—but what can swords do
Against the Prince of the Dark? Max sheathed his point
And crept around the pool.

In the middle of the wood was a Red Witch.
Max half expected her. He never expected
To find a witch's house so dirty and foolish,
A witch with a wide bosom yellow as butter,
Or a witch combing so many obscene things
From her black hair into her scarlet lap.
He never believed there would attempt to sing
The one that taught the rats to squeal and Bashan's
Bull to bellow.

"Littlest and last Van Vrooman, do you come too?"
She knew him, it appeared, would know him better,
The scarlet hulk of hell with a fat bosom,
Pirouetting at the bottom of the forest.
Certainly Max had come, but he was going,

Unequal contests never being commanded
On young knights only armed in innocency.
"When I am a grown man I will come here
And cut your head off!" That was very well;
Not a true heart beating in Christendom
Could have said more, but that for the present would do.
Max went straight home; and nothing chilled him more
Than the company kept him by the witch's laugh
And the witch's song, and the creeping of his flesh.

Max is more firmly domiciliated.
A great house is Van Vrooman, a green slope
South to the sun do the great ones inhabit
And a few children play on the lawn with the nurse.
Max has returned to his play, and you may find him,
His famous curls unsmoothed, if you will call
Where the Van Vroomans live, the tribe Van Vrooman
Live there, at least, when any are at home.

PIAZZA PIECE

—I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying
To make you hear. Your ears are soft and small
And listen to an old man not at all;
They want the young men's whispering and sighing.
But see the roses on your trellis dying
And hear the spectral singing of the moon—
For I must have my lovely lady soon.
I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying.

—I am a lady young in beauty waiting
Until my truelove comes, and then we kiss.
But what grey man among the vines is this
Whose words are dry and faint as in a dream?
Back from my trellis, sir, before I scream!
I am a lady young in beauty waiting.

ANTIQUE HARVESTERS

(*Scene: Of the Mississippi the bank sinister, and of the Ohio the bank sinister.*)

Tawny are the leaves turned, but they still hold.
It is the harvest; what shall this land produce?
A meager hill of kernels, a runnel of juice.
Declension looks from our land, it is old.
Therefore let us assemble, dry, grey, spare,
And mild as yellow air.

"I hear the creak of a raven's funeral wing."
The young men would be joying in the song
Of passionate birds; their memories are not long.
What is it thus rehearsed in sable? "Nothing."
Trust not but the old endure, and shall be older
Than the scornful beholder.

We pluck the spindling ears and gather the corn.
One spot has special yield? "On this spot stood
Heroes and drenched it with their only blood."
And talk meets talk, as echoes from the horn
Of the hunter—echoes are the old men's arts,
Ample are the chambers of their hearts.

Here come the hunters, keepers of a rite.
The horn, the hounds, the lank mares coursing by
Under quaint archetypes of chivalry;
And the fox, lovely ritualist, in flight
Offering his unearthly ghost to quarry;
And the fields, themselves to harry.

Resume, harvesters. The treasure is full bronze
Which you will garner for the Lady, and the moon
Could tinge it no yellower than does this noon;

But the grey will quench it shortly—the fields, men, stones.
Pluck fast, dreamers; prove as you rumble slowly
Not less than men, not wholly.

Bare the arm too, dainty youths, bend the knees
Under bronze burdens. And by an autumn tone
As by a grey, as by a green, you will have known
Your famous Lady's image; for so have these.
And if one say that easily will your hands
More prosper in other lands,

Angry as wasp-music be your cry then:
"Forsake the Proud Lady, of the heart of fire,
The look of snow, to the praise of a dwindled choir,
Song of degenerate specters that were men?
The sons of the fathers shall keep her, worthy of
What these have done in love."

True, it is said of our Lady, she ageth.
But see, if you peep shrewdly, she hath not stooped;
Take no thought of her servitors that have drooped,
For we are nothing; and if one talk of death—
Why, the ribs of the earth subsist frail as a breath
If but God wearieth.

Lew Sarett

Lew Sarett was born May 16, 1888, in Chicago, Illinois, and reared in the state of Michigan and in the Lake Superior country. He was educated at Beloit and the University of Illinois, receiving his LL.B. at the latter institution in 1916. However, he never practised law because, as he says, "foot-loose adventures in the woods ruined me for any confining work." Since sixteen he has spent much of his life in the Rocky Mountains and in the Canadian North; for eight years he worked intermittently as a woodsman and guide in that region. He has been a United States Ranger and still spends four months of each year in the remote districts of

the National Parks. In this nomadic life on the frontiers of America he has lived much of the time with Indians and backwoods folk; thus he has come to understand the bush country, the voyageur, and the aborigine.

Sarett's first volume, *Many Many Moons,* appeared in 1920. It is, as he calls it, a book of wilderness poems, poems which endeavor to capture the peculiar influence of Indian thought as well as the spiritual value of nature in its wilder aspects. His long and impressionistic monolog, "The Box of God" was awarded the Levinson prize (offered through *Poetry*) for 1921. It became the title poem of a subsequent volume, *The Box of God,* 1922, a collection which expresses a sort of primitive pantheism; even the lyrics echo the wood sounds and scenes which are familiar to the Indian, even though it is not the Indian himself who speaks. Here are flute notes as well as the rattle of dried gourds and the dull insistence of the tom-tom.

Sarett's more recent lyrics show a wider range; there is social significance in such verses as "Feud," which is intensified by a passion that is personal as well as racial. A third volume, *Slow Smoke,* is in preparation, a collection which will reveal an increase in technique and a wider outlook upon life.

MARCHING PINES

Up the drifted foothills,
  Like phantoms in a row,
The ragged lines of somber pines
  Filed across the snow.

Down the gloomy coulees
  The burdened troopers went,
Snowy packs upon their backs—
  Bowed of head and bent.

Up the cloudy mountains,
  A mournful singing band,
Marching aimless to some nameless,
  Undiscovered land.

IRON-WIND DANCES

Over and under
The shaking sky,
The war-drums thunder
When I dance by!—
Ho! a warrior proud,
I dance on a cloud,
For my ax shall feel
The enemy reel;
My heart shall thrill
To a bloody kill,—
Ten Sioux dead
Split open of head!—
Look! to the West!—
The sky-line drips,—
Blood from the breast!
Blood from the lips!
Ho! when I dance by,
The war-drums thunder
Over and under
The shaking sky.
Beat, beat on the drums,
For the Thunderbird comes.
Wuh!
Wuh!

FEUD

Poor wayworn creature! Oh, sorely harried deer,
What drove you, quivering like a poplar-blade,
To refuge with my herd? What holds you here
Within my meadow, broken and afraid?

Tilting your nose to tainted air, you thrill
And freeze to wailing wolves! Fear you the sound
Of the coyotes eager for a tender kill?
Or yet the baying of the hunter's hound?

Let fall your anguish, harried one, and rest;
Bed yourself down among your kin, my cattle;
Sleep unperturbed. No spoiler shall molest
You here this night, for I shall wage your battle.

There was a day when coyotes in a pack,
Wolves of another hue, another breed,
With Christ upon their lips, set out to track
Me down and drop me, for my blood, my creed.

Oh, hunted creature, once I knew the thud
Of padded feet that put you into flight,
The bugle-cry, suffused with lust for blood,
That trembled in the silver bell of night.

I knew your frenzied rocky run, the burst
Of lungs, the rivers of fire in every vein;
I knew your foaming lip, your boundless thirst,
The rain of molten-hammering in your brain.

Abide with me, then, against the wolves' return,
For I shall carry on the feud for you;
And it shall be, to me, of small concern
If the wolf-hearts walk on four soft feet or two.

Oh, let them come! And I shall burn their flanks
With a blast of hell to end their revelry,
And whistle molten silver through their ranks,
Laughing—one round for you, and one for me.

TO A WILD GOOSE OVER DECOYS

O lonely trumpeter, coasting down the sky,
Like a winter leaf blown from the bur-oak tree
By whipping winds, and flapping silverly
Against the sun,—I know your lonely cry.

I know the worn wild heart that bends your flight
And circles you above this beckoning lake,
Eager of neck, to find the honking drake
Who speaks of reedy refuge for the night.

I know the sudden rapture that you fling
In answer to our friendly gander's call—
Halloo! Beware decoys!—or you will fall
With a silver bullet whistling in your wing.

Beat on your weary flight across the blue!
Beware, O traveller, of our gabbling geese!
Beware this weedy counterfeit of peace!—
Oh, I was once a passing bird like you.

Florence Kiper Frank

Florence Kiper Frank was born in Atchison, Kansas, and educated at the University of Chicago. Since she was four years old she has lived in Chicago, Illinois, and is the wife of the lawyer, Jerome Frank. Besides her verse and short stories, which have appeared in various magazines, she is the author of several one-act plays which have been produced by the Provincetown Players of New York and other Little Theatre companies.

The Jew to Jesus and Other Poems (1915), although a queer mélange of immature and ironic verses, contains a lyricism which is no less lovely for voicing an angry beauty. Several of the poems are obviously from the sixteen-year-old period, others are the product of a not much later sentimentalism. But the youthful

fire in "The Jewish Conscript" as well as the quieter passion in the title-poem communicate a quality which Mrs. Frank's later lines seldom achieve. Nevertheless, her recent verse, if more uneven, is seldom without a personal and appealing accent.

THE JEW TO JESUS

O Man of my own people, I alone
Among these alien ones can know thy face,
I who have felt the kinship of our race
Burn in me as I sit where they intone
Thy praises,—those who, striving to make known
A God for sacrifice, have missed the grace
Of thy sweet human meaning in its place,
Thou who art of our blood-bond and our own.

Are we not sharers of the Passion? Yea,
In spirit-anguish closely by thy side
We have drained the bitter cup, and, tortured, felt
With thee the bruising of each heavy welt.
In every land is our Gethsemane.
A thousand times have we been crucified.

THE JEWISH CONSCRIPT

There are nearly a quarter of a million Jews in the Czar's army alone.—Newspaper clipping.

They have dressed me up in a soldier's dress,
With a rifle in my hand,
And have sent me bravely forth to shoot
My own in a foreign land.

Oh, many shall die for the fields of their homes,
And many in conquest wild,
But I shall die for the fatherland
That murdered my little child.

How many hundreds of years ago—
The nations wax and cease!—
Did the God of our fathers doom us to bear
The flaming message of peace!

We are the mock and the sport of time!
Yet why should I complain!—
For a Jew that they hung on the bloody cross,
He also died in vain.

Haniel Long

Haniel Long was born in Rangoon, Burma, March 9, 1888, and was educated at Exeter and Harvard. He has been teaching for some years at the Carnegie Institute of Technology at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with intervals of travel in Europe and the Far West.

Poems (1920) is one of the shyest volumes ever issued; even its fugitive fancies are apologetically reticent. But there is humor in Long, even though his whimsicality is almost as modest as his unassertive lyrics.

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES

They say that dead men tell no tales!

Except of barges with red sails
And sailors mad for nightingales;

Except of jongleurs stretched at ease
Beside old highways through the trees;

Except of dying moons that break
The hearts of lads who lie awake;

Except of fortresses in shade,
And heroes crumbled and betrayed.

But dead men tell no tales, they say!

Except old tales that burn away
The stifling tapestries of day:

Old tales of life, of love and hate,
Of time and space, and will, and fate.

Aline Kilmer

Aline (Murray) Kilmer, the step-daughter of Henry Mills Alden, the late editor-in-chief of *Harper's Magazine,* was born in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1888. She was married to Joyce Kilmer in 1909 and after his death during battle in France began to deliver lectures, beginning in 1917. Since her youth she has lived in New York.

Candles That Burn (1919), her first volume, reveals a personal as well as poetic warmth. Here is a domesticated flame, a quiet, but none the less colorful, hearth-fire. By its light Mrs. Kilmer's world is revealed with a quaintly individualized grace. Her poems about her children are particularly well characterized. *Vigils* (1921) is a more ambitious and even more original offering. The nimble dexterity of "Unlearning," the banter of "Perversity" and the clean fervor of "Things" display Mrs. Kilmer as a distinct poetic personality.

Early in 1925 Mrs. Kilmer's third volume appeared. *The Poor King's Daughter* has the grace of the preceding collections plus an ironic self-appraisal which even the sharpest of Mrs. Kilmer's earlier verses did not lead us to expect.

EXPERIENCE [1]

Deborah danced, when she was two,
As buttercups and daffodils do;

[1] From *Candles that Burn* by Aline Kilmer. Copyright, 1919, by George H. Doran Company.

Spirited, frail, naïvely bold,
Her hair a ruffled crest of gold.
And whenever she spoke her voice went singing
Like water up from a fountain springing.

But now her step is quiet and slow;
She walks the way primroses go;
Her hair is yellow instead of gilt,
Her voice is losing its lovely lilt;
And in place of her wild, delightful ways
A quaint precision rules her days.

For Deborah now is three, and, oh,
She knows so much that she did not know.

THINGS [1]

Sometimes when I am at tea with you,
I catch my breath
At a thought that is old as the world is old
And more bitter than death.

It is that the spoon that you just laid down
And the cup that you hold
May be here shining and insolent
When you are still and cold.

Your careless note that I laid away
May leap to my eyes like flame,
When the world has almost forgotten your voice
Or the sound of your name.

The golden Virgin da Vinci drew
May smile on over my head,
And daffodils nod in the silver vase
When you are dead.

[1] From *Vigils* by Aline Kilmer. Copyright, 1921, by George H. Doran Company.

So let moth and dust corrupt and thieves
Break through and I shall be glad,
Because of the hatred I bear to things
Instead of the love I had.

For life seems only a shuddering breath,
A smothered, desperate cry;
And things have a terrible permanence
When people die.

Alan Seeger

Alan Seeger was born in New York, June 22, 1888. When he was still a baby, his parents moved to Staten Island, where he remained through boyhood. Later, there were several other migrations, including a sojourn in Mexico, where Seeger spent the most impressionable years of his youth. In 1906 he entered Harvard; became one of the editors of the *Harvard Monthly;* returned to New York in 1910 and in 1913 set off for Paris—"a departing point," wrote William Archer, "which may fairly be called his Hegira, the turning point of his history." 1914 came, and the European war had not entered its third week when, along with some forty of his fellow-countrymen, Seeger enlisted in the Foreign Legion of France. He was in action almost continually, serving on various fronts. On July 1, 1916, a new advance began; a few days later the Legion was ordered to clear the Germans out of the village of Belloy-en-Santerre. On the fourth of July Seeger advanced in the first rush and his squad was practically wiped out by hidden machine-gun fire. Seeger fell, mortally wounded, and died the next morning.

Seeger's literary promise was far greater than his poetic accomplishment. With the exception of his one famous poem, there is little of importance in his collected *Poems* (published, with an Introduction by William Archer, in 1916). His letters from the front (published in 1917) show a keener sense of perception. Had he lived a few years more, he might have been a more certain recorder of a changed and changing world.

"I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH"[1]

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air—
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath—
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

Willard Wattles

Willard (Austin) Wattles was born at Bayneville, Kansas, July 8, 1888. He received his A.B. at the University of Kansas in

[1] From *Poems* by Alan Seeger. Copyright, 1916, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

1909 and since 1910 has divided his time between teaching English and harvesting wheat.

His first book was an anthology, *Sunflowers: A Book of Kansas Poems* (1914), to which he also contributed. *Lanterns in Gethsemane* (1918) consists, almost entirely, of mystical and religious poems. There is, however, little of the sermonizing unction and less cant in these pages. There is a fresh vibrancy here; a warm buoyance that glows against its theological background. Many of Wattles' verses have the peculiar grace of a parable joined to a nursery rhyme; "The Builder," "Jericho" and a few others seem like scraps of the Scripture rendered by Mother Goose.

THE BUILDER [1]

Smoothing a cypress beam
  With a scarred hand,
I saw a carpenter
  In a far land.

Down past the flat roofs
  Poured the white sun;
But still he bent his back,
  The patient one.

And I paused surprised
  In that queer place
To find an old man
  With a haunting face.

"Who art thou, carpenter,
  Of the bowed head;
And what buildest thou?"
  "Heaven," he said.

[1] By permission from *Lanterns in Gethsemane* by Willard Wattles. Copyright, 1918, by E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

CREEDS

How pitiful are little folk—
They seem so very small;
They look at stars, and think they are
Denominational.

Conrad Aiken

Conrad (Potter) Aiken was born at Savannah, Georgia, August 5, 1889. He attended Harvard, was chosen class poet during his senior year, received his A.B. in 1912, travelled extensively for three years, and since then he has devoted all his time to literature, living at South Yarmouth, Massachusetts, until 1921. In that year he moved his family to England; a few years later he bought a house on the Sussex coast at Rye.

The most outstanding feature of Aiken's work is its rapid adaptability and its slow growth. His first volume, *Earth Triumphant and Other Tales in Verse* (1914), is the Keats tradition crossed, paraphrased, and vulgarized by Masefield. *Turns and Movies* (1916) is a complete change; Masefield is exchanced for Masters. But in the less conspicuous half of this book Aiken begins to speak with his true voice. Here he is the natural musician, playing with new rhythms, haunting cadences. *The Jig of Forslin* (1916) is an elaboration of his method. In this volume Aiken goes back to the narrative—or rather, to a series of loosely connected stories —and, reinforced by studies in analytical psychology, explores "the process of vicarious wish fulfilment by which civilized man enriches his circumscribed life."

Nocturne of Remembered Spring (1917), *The Charnel Rose* (1918) and *The House of Dust* (1920) are packed with a tired but often beautiful music. Even though much of it is enlivened by injections of T. S. Eliot's conversational idiom, the effect is frequently misty and monotonous. Rain seems to fall persistently through these volumes; dust blows down the street; the shadows blur; everything dissolves in a wash of boredom and forgetfulness. Even the poignance seems on the point of falling asleep.

Often Aiken loses himself in this watery welter of language. In trying to create a closer *liaison* between poetry and music, he places so much importance on the rise and fall of syllables that his very excess of music defeats his purpose. His verse, thus, gains greatly on the sensuous side, but loses, in its murmuring indefiniteness, that vitality of speech which is the very blood of poetry. It is a subaqueous music, strangely like the magic of Debussy.

This weakening overinsistence on sound does not prevent Aiken from attaining many exquisite effects. Primarily, a lyric poet, he frequently condenses an emotion in a few lines; some of his best moments are these "lapses" into tune. The music of the Morning Song from "Senlin" (in *The Charnel Rose*) is rich with subtleties of rhythm. But it is much more than a lyrical movement. Beneath the flow and flexibility of these lines there is a delightful whimsicality, an extraordinary summoning of the immensities that loom behind the casual moments of everyday.

Punch: The Immortal Liar is an almost complete *volte face*. After it seemed conclusively established that Aiken's gift was limited to the twitching of overrefined nerves, to a too ready response to a gloomy subconsciousness, the poet strikes out toward a naked directness in one of the most brilliant philosophical narratives of the period. Dazzling though the first half of this work is, it is the second part which attains the heights. Here Punch, stripped of his mask of braggadocio, is revealed as the solitary, frustrated dreamer; a pitiful puppet floundering in a net he cannot see; jerked and gesticulating without knowledge of the strings which direct him—a symbol, in short, of man as marionette. This second part of *Punch* contains, not only Aiken's most delicate exposition of the inhibited soul, but some of the finest lyrics he has ever produced. Whatever the theme, the musician is always triumphant.

Priapus and the Pool (1922) discloses Aiken preëminently as a lyricist. Here are twenty-five songs, several of which are as subtly moving as those of any singer in America today. The succeeding volume, *The Pilgrimage of Festus* (1923), returns to the symphonic form; beneath its imaginative outlines it is an extended essay in epistemology. Festus is the lineal descendant of Aiken's own Senlin and a not distant relative of Ibsen's Peer Gynt.

Aiken's most recent verse, not only continues to plot the vague curves of the subconscious, but points to what may be a new de-

velopment for him. "The Road" is much more than a compelling dream-picture, it is the first poem of Aiken's which expresses compassion for humanity at large and a participation in its struggles. "And in the Hanging Gardens—" is an almost painful evocation of drouth and bitterness.

Besides his memorable poetry, Aiken has written some of the most sensitive criticism of the times, the best of his reviews having been published in *Scepticisms* (1919), a provocative and valuable series of studies. He has also edited a collection, *Modern American Poets* (1922) and the first *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1924) to appear in England. Lately the poet has turned to a closely woven and strangely unresolved fiction; his volume of introspective short stories, *Bring! Bring!* (1925) being in an altogether successful if not entirely new genre.

MIRACLES

Twilight is spacious, near things in it seem far,
And distant things seem near.
Now in the green west hangs a yellow star.
And now across old waters you may hear
The profound gloom of bells among still trees,
Like a rolling of huge boulders beneath seas.

Silent as thought in evening contemplation
Weaves the bat under the gathering stars.
Silent as dew, we seek new incarnation,
Meditate new avatars.
In a clear dusk like this
Mary climbed up the hill to seek her son,
To lower him down from the cross, and kiss
The mauve wounds, every one.

Men with wings
In the dusk walked softly after her.
She did not see them, but may have felt
The winnowed air around her stir;

She did not see them, but may have known
Why her son's body was light as a little stone.
She may have guessed that other hands were there
Moving the watchful air.

Now, unless persuaded by searching music
Which suddenly opens the portals of the mind,
We guess no angels,
And are contented to be blind.
Let us blow silver horns in the twilight,
And lift our hearts to the yellow star in the green,
To find perhaps, if, while the dew is rising,
Clear things may not be seen.

MORNING SONG FROM "SENLIN"

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,
I arise, I face the sunrise,
And do the things my fathers learned to do.
Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops
Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,
And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet
Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

It is morning. I stand by the mirror
And tie my tie once more.
While waves far off in a pale rose twilight
Crash on a white sand shore.
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair:
How small and white my face!—

The green earth tilts through a sphere of air
And bathes in a flame of space.
There are houses hanging above the stars
And stars hung under a sea . . .
And a sun far off in a shell of silence
Dapples my walls for me. . . .

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
Should I not pause in the light to remember God?
Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,
He is immense and lonely as a cloud.
I will dedicate this moment before my mirror
To him alone, for him I will comb my hair.
Accept these humble offerings, clouds of silence!
I will think of you as I descend the stair.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
The snail-track shines on the stones;
Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree
Repeating two clear tones.

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,
Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep.
The walls are about me still as in the evening,
I am the same, and the same name still I keep.
The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,
The stars pale silently in a coral sky.
In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,
Unconcerned, and tie my tie.

There are horses neighing on far-off hills
Tossing their long white manes,
And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,
Their shoulders black with rains. . . .
It is morning, I stand by the mirror
And surprise my soul once more;
The blue air rushes above my ceiling,
There are suns beneath my floor. . . .

. . . It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness
And depart on the winds of space for I know not where;
My watch is wound, a key is in my pocket,
And the sky is darkened as I descend the stair.
There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,
And a god among the stars; and I will go
Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak
And humming a tune I know. . . .

Vine-leaves tap at the window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

THE ROOM

Through that window—all else being extinct
Except itself and me—I saw the struggle
Of darkness against darkness. Within the room
It turned and turned, dived downward. Then I saw
How order might—if chaos wished—become:
And saw the darkness crush upon itself,
Contracting powerfully; it was as if
It killed itself, slowly: and with much pain.
Pain. The scene was pain, and nothing but pain.
What else, when chaos draws all forces inward
To shape a single leaf? . . .
For the leaf came
Alone and shining in the empty room;
After a while the twig shot downward from it;
And from the twig a bough; and then the trunk,
Massive and coarse; and last the one black root.
The black root cracked the walls. Boughs burst the window:
The great tree took possession.
Tree of trees!
Remember (when time comes) how chaos died

To shape the shining leaf. Then turn, have courage,
Wrap arms and roots together, be convulsed
With grief, and bring back chaos out of shape.
I will be watching then as I watch now.
I will praise darkness now, but then the leaf.

THE PUPPET DREAMS

(*From "Punch: The Immortal Liar"*)

There is a fountain in a wood
Where wavering lies a moon:
It plays to the slowly falling leaves
A sleepy tune.

. . . The peach-trees lean upon a wall
Of gold and ivory:
The peacock spreads his tail, the leaves
Fall silently. . . .

There, amid silken sounds and wine
And music idly broken,
The drowsy god observes his world
With no word spoken.

Arcturus, rise! Orion, fall! . . .
The white-winged stars obey. . . .
Or else he greets his Fellow-God;
And there, in the dusk, they play

A game of chess with stars for pawns
And a silver moon for queen:
Immeasurable as clouds, above
A chess-board world they lean,

And thrust their hands amid their beards,
And utter words profound
That shake the star-swung firmament
With a fateful sound! . . .

. . . The peach-trees lean upon a wall
Of gold and ivory;
The peacock spreads his tail; the leaves
Fall silently. . . .

PORTRAIT OF A GIRL

This is the shape of the leaf, and this of the flower,
And this the pale bole of the tree
Which watches its bough in a pool of unwavering water
In a land we never shall see.

The thrush on the bough is silent, the dew falls softly,
In the evening is hardly a sound. . . .
And the three beautiful pilgrims who come here together
Touch lightly the dust of the ground.

Touch it with feet that trouble the dust but as wings do,
Come shyly together, are still,
Like dancers who wait in a pause of the music, for music
The exquisite silence to fill . . .

This is the thought of the first, and this of the second,
And this the grave thought of the third:
"Linger we thus for a moment, palely expectant,
And silence will end, and the bird

"Sing the pure phrase, sweet phrase, clear phrase in the twilight
To fill the blue bell of the world;
And we, who on music so leaflike have drifted together,
Leaflike apart shall be whirled

"Into what but the beauty of silence, silence forever? . . ."
. . . This is the shape of the tree,
And the flower and the leaf, and the three pale beautiful
pilgrims:
This is what you are to me.

AND IN THE HANGING GARDENS—

And in the hanging gardens there is rain
From midnight until one, striking the leaves
And bells of flowers, and stroking boles of planes,
And drawing slow arpeggios over pools
And stretching strings of sound from eaves to ferns.
The princess reads. The knave of diamonds sleeps.
The king is drunk, and flings a golden goblet
Down from the turret window (curtained with rain)
Into the lilacs.
And at one o'clock
The vulcan under the garden wakes and beats
The gong upon his anvil. Then the rain
Ceases, but gently ceases, dripping still,
And sound of falling water fills the dark
As leaves grow bold and upright, and as eaves
Part with water. The princess turns the page
Beside the candle, and between two braids
Of golden hair. And reads: "From there I went
Northward a journey of four days, and came
To a wild village in the hills, where none
Was living save the vulture and the rat
And one old man who laughed but could not speak.
The roofs were fallen in, the well grown over
With weed. And it was here my father died.
Then eight days further, bearing slightly west,
The cold wind blowing sand against our faces,
The food tasting of sand. And as we stood
By the dry rock that marks the highest point

My brother said: 'Not too late is it yet
To turn, remembering home.' And we were silent
Thinking of home." The princess shuts her eyes
And feels the tears forming beneath her eyelids
And opens them, and tears fall on the page.
The knave of diamonds in the darkened room
Throws off his covers, sleeps, and snores again.
The king goes slowly down the turret stairs
To find the goblet.

And at two o'clock
The vulcan in his smithy underground
Under the hanging gardens, where the drip
Of rain among the clematis and ivy
Still falls from sipping flower to purple flower
Smites twice his anvil, and the murmur comes
Among the roots and vines. The princess reads:
"As I am sick, and cannot write you more,
And have not long to live, I give this letter
To him, my brother, who will bear it south
And tell you how I died. Ask how it was,
There in the northern desert, where the grass
Was withered, and the horses, all but one,
Perished . . ." The princess drops her golden head
Upon the page between her two white arms
And golden braids. The knave of diamonds wakes
And at his window in the darkened room
Watches the lilacs tossing, where the king
Seeks for the goblet.

And at three o'clock
The moon inflames the lilac heads, and thrice
The vulcan, in his root-bound smithy, clangs
His anvil; and the sounds creep softly up
Among the vines and walls. The moon is round,
Round as a shield above the turret top.
The princess blows her candle out, and weeps
In the pale room, where scent of lilacs comes,
Weeping, with hands across her eyelids, thinking

Of withered grass, withered by sandy wind.
The knave of diamonds, in his darkened room,
Holds in his hands a key, and softly steps
Along the corridor, and slides the key
Into the door that guards her. Meanwhile, slowly,
The king, with raindrops on his beard and hands,
And dripping sleeves, climbs up the turret stairs,
Holding the goblet upright in one hand;
And pauses on the midmost step, to taste
One drop of wine, wherewith wild rain has mixed.

THE ROAD

Three then came forward out of darkness, one
An old man bearded, his old eyes red with weeping,
A peasant, with hard hands. "Come now," he said,
"And see the Road, for which our people die.
Twelve miles of road we've made, a little only,
Westward winding. Of human blood and stone
We build; and in a thousand years will come
Beyond the hills to sea."
I went with them,
Taking a lantern, which upon their faces
Showed years and grief; and in a time we came
To the wild road which wound among wild hills
Westward; and so along this road we stopped,
Silent, thinking of all the dead men there
Compounded with sad clay. Slowly we moved:
For they were old and weak, had given all
Their life to build this twelve poor miles of road,
Muddy, under the rain. And in my hand,
Turning the lantern here or there, I saw
Deep holes of water where the raindrop splashed,
And rainfilled footprints in the grass, and heaps
Of broken stone, and rusted spades and picks,
And helves of axes. And the old man spoke,

Holding my wrist: "Three hundred years it took
To build these miles of road: three hundred years;
And human lives unnumbered. But the day
Will come when it is done." Then spoke another,
One not so old, but old, whose face was wrinkled:
"And when it comes, our people will all sing
For joy, passing from east to west, or west
To east, returning, with the light behind them;
All meeting in the road and singing there."
And the third said: "The road will be their life;
A heritage of blood. Grief will be in it,
And beauty out of grief. And I can see
How all the women's faces will be bright.
In that time, laughing, they will remember us.
Blow out your lantern now, for day is coming."

My lantern blown out, in a little while
We climbed in long light up a hill, where climbed
The dwindling road, and ended in a field.
Peasants were working in the field, bowed down
With unrewarded work and grief and years
Of pain. And as we passed them, one man fell
Into a furrow that was bright with water
And gave a cry that was half cry, half song—
"The road . . . the road . . . the road . . ." And all then
fell
Upon their knees and sang.
We four passed on
Over the hills, to westward. . . . Then I felt
How tears ran down my face, tears without end,
And knew that all my life henceforth was weeping,
Weeping, thinking of human grief, and human
Endeavour fruitless in a world of pain.
And when I held my hands up they were old;
I knew my face would not be young again.

Hervey Allen (William Hervey Allen, Jr.) was born December 8, 1889, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He received his early education in the city of his birth, attended the U. S. Naval Academy, but resigned before graduating; received his B.S. in Economics at Pittsburgh in 1915, and took special courses at Harvard 1921-1922. He saw military service as Second Lieutenant of Infantry on the Mexican border in 1916 and as First Lieutenant with the A. E. F. in France, where he was seriously wounded in August, 1918. Returning to America that year, he drifted South. From 1919 to 1924 he lived in Charleston, South Carolina, and while there wrote *Carolina Chansons* (1922) in collaboration with DuBose Heyward. With Heyward he founded The Poetry Society of South Carolina and assisted in awakening interest in poetry through the South.

Two volumes of Allen's had already appeared: *Wampum and Old Gold* (1921) and *The Bride of Huitzil* (1922), the most distinguished feature of the former being a war ballad, "The Blindman," an annual prize being offered in commemoration of this poem. Allen's latest volume, *Earth Moods and Other Poems* (1925), is by far his most arresting presentation. This collection displays Allen as much more than a local poet. The major part of the volume is devoted to longer poems which attempt to express the evolutionary struggle from nebulous matter to man. The treatment is half epical, half legendary; and though as yet Allen's aim exceeds his grasp, there is not only a splendor of conception but a definiteness of execution in such poems as "The Saga of Lief the Lucky" and "Funeral at High Tide." The "other poems" are shorter and more compactly colored; "Gargantuana" and "Whim Alley" being particularly effective examples of Allen's ability to make decorations which do not suffer from the usual "picturesque" affectations. At present Allen stands at the cross-roads: he has the possibilities of being either a lyricist or a writer of epics. It will be interesting to see which rôle he chooses.

WHIM ALLEY

Whim Alley once led into Danger Court
Loud with the raucous talk of cockatoos,
Where bearded Jews a-squat in alcove shops
Sat waiting like royal falcons in a mews.
Softly as rain the voweled Portuguese
Fell from their red-ripe lips with eastern news
Of galleons whose names were melodies—
Softly—between the shrieks of cockatoos.
Who cared for royal navigation laws
In Danger Court—for what the Soldan said—
Or papal lines between the east and west?
Abram out-Shylocked Isaac with applause,
And clutched the sweated doubloons to his chest,
Whose late lamented owners were scarce dead.
For there were smugglers' bargains to be made
Where leaping arches looped along the walls,
While sunlight smouldered down the long arcade
And dizened into flame on Spanish shawls,
And what the sequin brought in Louis d'or
Was news,—and rumors passed from Trebizond,
While Rachel clinked brass anklets in a door
With a straight glimpse of blue sea just beyond.
Dark sailors passed with tang of wine and tar,
And merchants with wide hats and wider fringes,
And two black Sambos smoked the same cigar
Upon a chest with three locks and five hinges.
Vanished in air! Those arches roof a cow,
To parrots' rings the frowsy hens resort;
Whim Alley leads to less than nothing now,
And only shadows dwell in Danger Court.

GARGANTUANA

Gargantuan ranges of blue-dappled hills
Roll down titanic coasts of cobalt shires,
While inland dreams a sunstruck city's ghost,
Streaked with the level scarfs from temple fires.
Down, down the hills a bull-voiced waterfall
Plunges from cloudy cliffs that climb so high,
It echoes like an organ from a hall
Of stairs that wind into the windy sky.
And there are monstrous footprints in the sand
That twist up rusty roadways red as snakes
Onto an upland paved with level floors
Of copper water stagnant in iron lakes.
And hooded peaks vault into clouded wonder
From whence the island's voice rolls out to sea,
Reverberating words of blatant thunder,
Dull as a demon's glee.
Its hills sequester meadows walled with fire,
On which like evil prayers the sphinxes lie,
With flame-like plumes that bloom upon their wings,
While red clouds wither by—
The roc has made his nest among the cliffs,
And in the evening from a mountain's dome,
Remote as thought, there blurs the sound of drums
That call the giants home.

Claude McKay

Claude McKay was born in Jamaica, West Indies, in 1889. He had, as he says, "no education" except what instruction he received from his brother. For a while he was in the service of the Kingston Constabulary. He came to the United States in 1912 and was a student of agriculture at the Kansas State College. After leaving school McKay tried to earn his living with varying success on Pullman cars, in kitchens, as a menial in hotels.

Meanwhile, he had been writing, and some of his more belligerent verse had attracted the attention of a few literary radicals. In 1920 he became associated with *The Liberator* and, shortly thereafter, was made associate editor.

Songs of Jamaica, his first immature volume, was published while McKay was still in Jamaica; his second and more characteristic *Spring in New Hampshire* was published by Grant Richards in London in 1920. The best of both volumes with many more recent poems appear in *Harlem Shadows* (1922), with an introduction by Max Eastman. Here the pure blooded Negro speaks with a boldness in curious contrast to the sentimental dialect verse which used to be affected by most of his race. His melodies are instinctive, the naked force of his invectives is as deep as it is certain.

IF WE MUST DIE

If we must die—let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die—oh, let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

Oh, Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;
Though far outnumbered, let us still be brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but—fighting back!

Christopher Morley

Christopher (Darlington) Morley was born at Haverford, Pennsylvania, May 5, 1890. He graduated from Haverford College in

1910 and was Rhodes Scholar at New College, Oxford, England, 1910-13.

Since 1914 he has been on the staff of various periodicals, coming to New York in 1920 to run his column ("The Bowling Green") on the New York *Evening Post,* subsequently joining the staff of *The Saturday Review of Literature.*

Morley is the author of more than a dozen dissimilar volumes of essays, skits, gossip, travel-notes, light verse and serious poetry. His most distinguished volume, *Where the Blue Begins* (1922), is a prose fantasy which is both excellent nonsense and dexterous satire.

As a writer of serious poetry, Morley has less to say. *The Rocking Horse* (1919), *Hide and Seek* (1920) and *Chimneysmoke* (1922) sink too often in their own sentiments; their sweetness is frequently cloying, their charm a little too conscious. But Morley's vigor energizes his lines and prevents many of his verses—especially those in the latter volume—from becoming tawdry, while his technique saves them from the fatuity of their own subjects.

QUICKENING[1]

Such little, puny things are words in rhyme:
  Poor feeble loops and strokes as frail as hairs;
You see them printed here, and mark their chime,
  And turn to your more durable affairs.
  Yet on such petty tools the poet dares
To run his race with mortar, bricks and lime,
  And draws his frail stick to the point, and stares
To aim his arrow at the heart of Time.

Intangible, yet pressing, hemming in,
  This measured emptiness engulfs us all,
And yet he points his paper javelin
  And sees it eddy, waver, turn, and fall,
And feels, between delight and trouble torn,
The stirring of a sonnet still unborn.

[1] From *Hide and Seek* by Christopher Morley. Copyright, 1920. George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

TO A POST-OFFICE INKWELL[1]

How many humble hearts have dipped
In you, and scrawled their manuscript!
Have shared their secrets, told their cares,
Their curious and quaint affairs!

Your pool of ink, your scratchy pen,
Have moved the lives of unborn men,
And watched young people, breathing hard,
Put Heaven on a postal card.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Edna St. Vincent Millay, the most gifted of the younger lyricists, was born February 22, 1892, at Rockland, Maine. After a childhood spent almost entirely in New England, she attended Vassar College, from which she was graduated in 1917. Since that time she has lived in New York City. Besides her keenly individual lyrics, Miss Millay has written a quantity of short stories under various pseudonyms (*Distressing Dialogues,* 1924, being published under the name of "Nancy Boyd"), has translated several songs, and has been connected with the Provincetown Players both as playwright and performer.

Although the bulk of her poetry is not large, the quality of it approaches and sometimes attains greatness. Her first long poem, "Renascence," was the outstanding feature of *The Lyric Year* (1912), an anthology which revealed many new names. "Renascence" was written when Miss Millay was scarcely nineteen; it remains today one of the most remarkable poems of this generation. Beginning like a child's aimless verse, it proceeds, with a calm lucidity, to an amazing climax. It is as if a child had, in the midst of its ingenuousness, uttered some terrific truth. The sheer cumulative power of this poem is surpassed only by its passages of individual beauty.

Renascence, Miss Millay's first volume, was published in 1917.

[1] From *Chimneysmoke* by Christopher Morley. Copyright, 1922. George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

It is full of the same passion as its title poem; here is a hunger for beauty so intense that no delight is great enough to give the soul peace. Such poems as "God's World" and a few of the unnamed sonnets, capturing the breathless awe of "Renascence" in a smaller compass, vibrate with a similar rapture.

A Few Figs From Thistles (originally published in 1920 and revised several times since then), although one of Miss Millay's most popular collections, is her least commendable performance. In many of these self-conscious flippancies, Miss Millay has exchanged her poetic birthright for a mess of cleverness. Although there are a few poems which are worthy of her, the greater part of this volume smirks with a facile sophistication, a series of pertly cynical pirouettes.

Second April (1921) is a return to the triumph of her first book. In spite of certain lapses in which the poet seems to have adopted a fixed simper, *Second April* expresses that passion for identification with all of life which no poet in her generation has surpassed; she has made ecstasy articulate and almost tangible. A new note, new at least for this singer, creeps into the lyrics, the note of gravity; here is dignity, almost an austerity, of emotion. In her very inversions and archaic epithets, her "forsooths" and "alacks," Miss Millay seems to be a belated Elizabethan; she can use locutions which ordinarily have a false and affected ring. Far from marring her work, the antique accents of her speech fit perfectly in the light banter of "The Bean-Stalk," the intensity of "The Poet and His Book," one of Miss Millay's finest achievements, and the unforgettable "Elegy."

Three plays were published in 1921: *Two Slatterns and a King,* "a moral interlude" in adroit couplets, *The Lamp and the Bell,* a five-act drama which is a strange composite of native speech and Shakespearian echoes, and *Aria Da Capo,* a one-act play which, for all its brevity, is a profound satire on war and war-makers.

The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems (1924) wears its author's heart on its sleeve; often, in fact, that responsive organ is displayed as a shining toy, a decoration tricked with impudent ribbons. But here Miss Millay begins to wear her heart with a difference. No longer brightly narcistic or consciously arch, she speaks with a disillusion that contains more than a tinge of bitterness. Love, she announces, sometimes with a wry wistfulness, sometimes with a proud scorn, is not enough. If, she tells us, it is

hard never to attain one's desires, it is even more painful to have them fulfilled. This change of key makes *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems* Miss Millay's most uneven collection. The title-poem, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1922, barely saves itself from sentimentality; the irritating coyness of "The Return from Town" is in juxtaposition with the lyric stab of "Autumn Chant." But the twenty-two sonnets which comprise Part Four of this book are not only representative of Miss Millay's best, but are among the finest examples of this form we have. As a sonneteer alone Miss Millay takes her place among the masters.

RENASCENCE

All I could see from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood;
I turned and looked another way,
And saw three islands in a bay.
So with my eyes I traced the line
Of the horizon, thin and fine,
Straight around till I was come
Back to where I'd started from;
And all I saw from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood.
Over these things I could not see;
These were the things that bounded me;
And I could touch them with my hand,
Almost, I thought, from where I stand.
And all at once things seemed so small
My breath came short, and scarce at all.
But, sure, the sky is big, I said;
Miles and miles above my head;
So here upon my back I'll lie
And look my fill into the sky.
And so I looked, and, after all,
The sky was not so very tall.
The sky, I said, must somewhere stop,
And—sure enough!—I see the top!

The sky, I thought, is not so grand;
I 'most could touch it with my hand!
And, reaching up my hand to try,
I screamed to feel it touch the sky.

I screamed, and—lo!—Infinity
Came down and settled over me;
And, pressing of the Undefined
The definition on my mind,
Held up before my eyes a glass
Through which my shrinking sight did pass
Until it seemed I must behold
Immensity made manifold;
Whispered me a word whose sound
Deafened the air for worlds around,
And brought unmuffled to my ears
The gossiping of friendly spheres,
The creaking of the tented sky,
The ticking of Eternity.

I saw and heard, and knew at last
The How and Why of all things, past
And present, and forevermore.
The universe, cleft to the core,
Lay open to my probing sense
That, sick'ning, I would fain pluck thence
But could not,—nay! But needs must suck
At the great wound, and could not pluck
My lips away till I had drawn
All venom out.—Ah, fearful pawn!
For my omniscience I paid toll
In infinite remorse of soul.
All sin was of my sinning, all
Atoning mine, and mine the gall
Of all regret. Mine was the weight
Of every brooded wrong, the hate

That stood behind each envious thrust,
Mine every greed, mine every lust.
And all the while for every grief,
Each suffering, I craved relief
With individual desire,—
Craved all in vain! And felt fierce fire
About a thousand people crawl;
Perished with each,—then mourned for all!
A man was starving in Capri;
He moved his eyes and looked at me;
I felt his gaze, I heard his moan,
And knew his hunger as my own.
I saw at sea a great fog-bank
Between two ships that struck and sank;
A thousand screams the heavens smote;
And every scream tore through my throat.
No hurt I did not feel, no death
That was not mine; mine each last breath
That, crying, met an answering cry
From the compassion that was I.
All suffering mine, and mine its rod;
Mine, pity like the pity of God.
Ah, awful weight! Infinity
Pressed down upon the finite Me!
My anguished spirit, like a bird,
Beating against my lips I heard;
Yet lay the weight so close about
There was no room for it without.
And so beneath the weight lay I
And suffered death, but could not die.

Deep in the earth I rested now;
Cool is its hand upon the brow
And soft its breast beneath the head
Of one who is so gladly dead.
And all at once, and over all,
The pitying rain began to fall;

I lay and heard each pattering hoof
Upon my lowly, thatchèd roof,
And seemed to love the sound far more
Than ever I had done before.
For rain it hath a friendly sound
To one who's six feet underground;
And scarce the friendly voice or face:
A grave is such a quiet place.

The rain, I said, is kind to come
And speak to me in my new home.
I would I were alive again
To kiss the fingers of the rain,
To drink into my eyes the shine
Of every slanting silver line,
To catch the freshened, fragrant breeze
From drenched and dripping apple-trees.
For soon the shower will be done,
And then the broad face of the sun
Will laugh above the rain-soaked earth
Until the world with answering mirth
Shakes joyously, and each round drop
Rolls, twinkling, from its grass-blade top.
How can I bear it; buried here,
While overhead the sky grows clear
And blue again after the storm?
O, multi-colored, multiform,
Belovèd beauty over me,
That I shall never, never see
Again! Spring-silver, autumn-gold,
That I shall never more behold!
Sleeping your myriad magics through,
Close-sepulchred away from you!
O God, I cried, give me new birth,
And put me back upon the earth!
Upset each cloud's gigantic gourd
And let the heavy rain, down-poured

In one big torrent, set me free,
Washing my grave away from me!

I ceased; and, through the breathless hush
That answered me, the far-off rush
Of herald wings came whispering
Like music down the vibrant string
Of my ascending prayer, and—crash!
Before the wild wind's whistling lash
The startled storm-clouds reared on high
And plunged in terror down the sky,
And the big rain in one black wave
Fell from the sky and struck my grave.

I know not how such things can be
I only know there came to me
A fragrance such as never clings
To aught save happy living things;
A sound as of some joyous elf
Singing sweet songs to please himself,
And, through and over everything,
A sense of glad awakening.
The grass, a tip-toe at my ear,
Whispering to me I could hear;
I felt the rain's cool finger-tips
Brushed tenderly across my lips,
Laid gently on my sealèd sight,
And all at once the heavy night
Fell from my eyes and I could see,—
A drenched and dripping apple-tree,
A last long line of silver rain,
A sky grown clear and blue again.
And as I looked a quickening gust
Of wind blew up to me and thrust
Into my face a miracle
Of orchard-breath, and with the smell,—

I know not how such things can be!—
I breathed my soul back into me.
Ah! Up then from the ground sprang I
And hailed the earth with such a cry
As is not heard save from a man
Who has been dead, and lives again.
About the trees my arms I wound;
Like one gone mad I hugged the ground;
I raised my quivering arms on high;
I laughed and laughed into the sky,
Till at my throat a strangling sob
Caught fiercely, and a great heart-throb
Sent instant tears into my eyes;
O God, I cried, no dark disguise
Can e'er hereafter hide from me
Thy radiant identity!
Thou canst not move across the grass
But my quick eyes will see Thee pass,
Nor speak, however silently,
But my hushed voice will answer Thee.
I know the path that tells Thy way
Through the cool eve of every day;
God, I can push the grass apart
And lay my finger on Thy heart!

The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky,—
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat—the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

GOD'S WORLD

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!
Thy mists that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with colour! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,
But never knew I this;
Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me,—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

THE PEAR TREE

In this squalid, dirty dooryard,
Where the chickens scratch and run,
White, incredible, the pear tree
Stands apart and takes the sun,

Mindful of the eyes upon it,
Vain of its new holiness,
Like the waste-man's little daughter
In her first communion dress.

WILD SWANS

I looked in my heart while the wild swans went over;—
And what did I see I had not seen before?
Only a question less or a question more;

Nothing to match the flight of wild birds flying.
Tiresome heart, forever living and dying!
House without air! I leave you and lock your door!
Wild swans, come over the town, come over
The town again, trailing your legs and crying!

THE POET AND HIS BOOK

Down, you mongrel, Death!
Back into your kennel!
I have stolen breath
In a stalk of fennel!
You shall scratch and you shall whine
Many a night, and you shall worry
Many a bone, before you bury
One sweet bone of mine!

When shall I be dead?
When my flesh is withered,
And above my head
Yellow pollen gathered
All the empty afternoon?
When sweet lovers pause and wonder
Who am I that lie thereunder,
Hidden from the moon?

This my personal death?—
That my lungs be failing
To inhale the breath
Others are exhaling?
This my subtle spirit's end?—
Ah, when the thawed winter splashes
Over these chance dust and ashes,
Weep not me, my friend!

Me, by no means dead
  In that hour, but surely
When this book, unread,
  Rots to earth obscurely,
And no more to any breast,
  Close against the clamorous swelling
  Of the thing there is no telling,
Are these pages pressed!

When this book is mould,
  And a book of many
Waiting to be sold
  For a casual penny,
In a little open case,
  In a street unclean and cluttered,
  Where a heavy mud is spattered
From the passing drays,

Stranger, pause and look;
  From the dust of ages
Lift this little book,
  Turn the tattered pages,
Read me, do not let me die!
  Search the fading letters, finding
  Steadfast in the broken binding
All that once was I!

When these veins are weeds,
  When these hollowed sockets
Watch the rooty seeds
  Bursting down like rockets,
And surmise the spring again,
  Or, remote in that black cupboard,
  Watch the pink worms writhing upward
At the smell of rain,

Boys and girls that lie
  Whispering in the hedges,
Do not let me die,
  Mix me in your pledges;
Boys and girls that slowly walk
  In the woods, and weep, and quarrel,
  Staring past the pink wild laurel,
Mix me with your talk.

Do not let me die!
  Farmers at your raking,
When the sun is high,
  While the hay is making,
When, along the stubble strewn,
  Withering on their stalks uneaten,
  Strawberries turn dark and sweeten
In the lapse of noon;

Shepherds on the hills,
  In the pastures, drowsing
To the tinkling bells
  Of the brown sheep browsing;
Sailors crying through the storm;
  Scholars at your study; hunters
  Lost amid the whirling winter's
Whiteness uniform;

Men that long for sleep;
  Men that wake and revel;—
If an old song leap
  To your senses' level
At such moments, may it be
  Sometimes, though a moment only,
  Some forgotten, quaint and homely
Vehicle of me!

Women at your toil,
  Women at your leisure
Till the kettle boil,
  Snatch of me your pleasure,
Where the broom-straw marks the leaf;
  Women quiet with your weeping
  Lest you wake a workman sleeping,
Mix me with your grief!

Boys and girls that steal
  From the shocking laughter
Of the old, to kneel
  By a dripping rafter
Under the discolored eaves,
  Out of trunks with hingeless covers
  Lifting tales of saint and lovers,
Travelers, goblins, thieves,

Suns that shine by night,
  Mountains made from valleys,—
Bear me to the light,
  Flat upon your bellies
By the webby window lie,
  Where the little flies are crawling,—
  Read me, margin me with scrawling,
Do not let me die!

Sexton, ply your trade!
  In a shower of gravel
Stamp upon your spade!
  Many a rose shall ravel,
Many a metal wreath shall rust
  In the rain, and I go singing
  Through the lots where you are flinging
Yellow clay on dust!

I SHALL GO BACK

I shall go back again to the bleak shore
And build a little shanty on the sand
In such a way that the extremest band
Of brittle seaweed will escape my door
But by a yard or two, and nevermore
Shall I return to take you by the hand;
I shall be gone to what I understand
And happier than I ever was before.

The love that stood a moment in your eyes,
The words that lay a moment on your tongue,
Are one with all that in a moment dies,
A little under-said and over-sung;
But I shall find the sullen rocks and skies
Unchanged from what they were when I was young.

ELEGY

Let them bury your big eyes
In the secret earth securely,
Your thin fingers, and your fair,
Soft, indefinite-colored hair,—
All of these in some way, surely,
From the secret earth shall rise.
Not for these I sit and stare,
Broken and bereft completely;
Your young flesh that sat so neatly
On your little bones will sweetly
Blossom in the air.

But your voice,—never the rushing
Of a river underground,
Not the rising of the wind
In the trees before the rain,

Not the woodcock's watery call,
Not the note the white-throat utters,
Not the feet of children pushing
Yellow leaves along the gutters
In the blue and bitter fall,
Shall content my musing mind
For the beauty of that sound
That in no new way at all
Ever will be heard again.

Sweetly through the sappy stalk
Of the vigorous weed,
Holding all it held before,
Cherished by the faithful sun,
On and on eternally
Shall your altered fluid run,
Bud and bloom and go to seed;
But your singing days are done;
But the music of your talk
Never shall the chemistry
Of the secret earth restore.
All your lovely words are spoken.
Once the ivory box is broken,
Beats the golden bird no more.

WHAT LIPS MY LIPS HAVE KISSED

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,
I have forgotten, and what arms have lain
Under my head till morning; but the rain
Is full of ghosts to-night, that tap and sigh
Upon the glass and listen for reply;
And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain
For unremembered lads that not again
Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.

Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,
Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,
Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:
I cannot say what loves have come and gone;
I only know that summer sang in me
A little while, that in me sings no more.

PITY ME NOT

Pity me not because the light of day
At close of day no longer walks the sky;
Pity me not for beauties passed away
From field and thicket as the year goes by;
Pity me not the waning of the moon,
Nor that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,
Nor that a man's desire is hushed so soon,
And you no longer look with love on me.

This have I known always: love is no more
Than the wide blossom which the wind assails;
Than the great tide that treads the shifting shore,
Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales.
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

EUCLID ALONE HAS LOOKED ON BEAUTY BARE

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare.
Let all who prate of Beauty hold their peace,
And lay them prone upon the earth and cease
To ponder on themselves, the while they stare
At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
In shapes of shifting lineage; let geese
Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release
From dusty bondage into luminous air.

O blinding hour, O holy, terrible day,
When first the shaft into his vision shone
Of light anatomized! Euclid alone
Has looked on Beauty bare. Fortunate they
Who, though once only and then but far away,
Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.

Edwin Curran

Edwin Curran was born at Zanesville, Ohio, May 10, 1892, and was educated at St. Thomas' School in the city of his birth. After working as an unskilled laborer in various trades, he learned telegraphy in 1914 and has been employed ever since as an operator for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company.

In 1917 he printed a little paper-bound pamphlet of thirty pages (*First Poems*) with this naïve note: "Price of this book is 35 cents postpaid. Author is 25, unmarried, a beginner and needs publisher. If this volume meets expenses, another, possibly better, will be issued." Expecting to find poetry of an absurd simplicity, one is startled to find striking images, strange pictures and (in such poems as "Soldier's Epitaph" and "Sailing of Columbus") lines like:

We climbed the slippery alleys of the sea

and many a lyric flash like:

The stars, like bells, flash down the silver sky . . .
Ringing like chimes on frozen trees, or cry
Along the marble ground.

Second Poems (1920) has a similar beauty mixed with banality. Both booklets are a jumble of passion, platitude, bad grammar and exaltation. Curran has absolutely no critical perceptions; he has little control over his music. For better or for worse, his mood controls him.

AUTUMN

The music of the autumn winds sings low,
Down by the ruins of the painted hills,
Where death lies flaming with a marvelous glow,
Upon the ash of rose and daffodils.
But I can find no melancholy here
To see the naked rocks and thinning trees;
Earth strips to grapple with the winter year—
I see her gnarled hills plan for victories!

I love the earth who goes to battle now,
To struggle with the wintry whipping storm
And bring the glorious spring out from the night.
I see earth's muscles bared, her battle brow,
And am not sad, but feel her marvelous charm
As splendidly she plunges in the fight.

THE PAINTED HILLS OF ARIZONA

The rainbows all lie crumpled on these hills,
The red dawns scattered on their colored sills.
These hills have caught the lightning in its flight,
Caught colors from the skies of day and night
And shine with shattered stars and suns; they hold
Dyed yellow, red and purple, blue and gold.
Red roses seem within their marble blown,
A painted garden chiseled in the stone;
The rose and violet trickling through their veins,
Where they drop brilliant curtains to the plains—
A ramp of rock and granite, jeweled and brightening
Like some great colored wall of sudden lightning!

Maxwell Bodenheim was born at Natchez, Mississippi, May 26, 1892. His education, with the exception of grammar school training, was achieved under the guidance of the U. S. Army, in which Bodenheim served a full enlistment of three years, beginning in 1910. For a while he studied law and art in Chicago, but his mind, fascinated by the new poetry, turned to literature. He wrote steadily for four years without having a single poem accepted. In 1918 his first volume appeared and even those who were puzzled or repelled by Bodenheim's complex idiom were forced to recognize its individuality.

Minna and Myself (1918) reveals, first of all, this poet's sensitivity to words. Words, under his hands, have unexpected growths; placid nouns and sober adjectives bear fantastic fruit. Sometimes he packs his metaphors so close that they become inextricably mixed. Sometimes he spins his fantasies so thin that the cord of coherence snaps and the poem frays into unpatterned ravellings. But, at his best, Bodenheim is as clear-headed as he is colorful.

In *Advice* (1920) Bodenheim's manner—and his mannerisms—are intensified. There is scarcely a phrase that is not tricked out with more ornaments and associations than it can bear; whole poems sink beneath the weight of profuse decorations. But this volume gives evidence of the ironic imagination which becomes the dominating feature of his later work.

Introducing Irony (1922) and *Against This Age* (1923) allow the sardonic impulse to dictate its harshest accents. The communication is more intellectually involved than ever: the expression of an acrobatic mind that juggles a dozen mixed metaphors, balancing itself meanwhile upon the knives of emotion with a mordant grimace. *The Sardonic Arm* (1923) shows an author acrid, grotesque, verbally dandified. But he is seldom unintelligible. Let those who find him merely a malicious phrase-twister read such probing though intricate analyses as those which open *Introducing Irony*. Even when Bodenheim writes in the spirit of resentment which is self-confessed in *Against This Age,* he has something to say which the reader, provoked though he may be by the author's supercilious disdain, might listen to with profit. It is true that Bodenheim too often writes in the rôle of literary ring-master, cracking his savage whip over cowering adjectives and recalci-

trant adverbs, compelling them to leap in unwilling pairs over the fantastically piled barriers of his imagination. It is true that he himself is a sardonic euphuist, leaping desperately from one image to another. But in the realm of the whimsical grotesque, Bodenheim's footing is sure; his is a nimble if disquieting transilience.

Besides these volumes of poetry, Bodenheim is the author of three novels, *Crazy Man* (1924) and *Replenishing Jessica* (1925) being the most successful as well as the most self-revealing.

POET TO HIS LOVE

An old silver church in a forest
Is my love for you.
The trees around it
Are words that I have stolen from your heart.
An old silver bell, the last smile you gave,
Hangs at the top of my church.
It rings only when you come through the forest
And stand beside it.
And then it has no need for ringing,
For your voice takes its place.

OLD AGE

In me is a little painted square
Bordered by old shops with gaudy awnings.
And before the shops sit smoking, open-bloused old men,
Drinking sunlight.
The old men are my thoughts;
And I come to them each evening, in a creaking cart,
And quietly unload supplies.
We fill slim pipes and chat
And inhale scents from pale flowers in the centre of the square. . . .
Strong men, tinkling women, and dripping, squealing children
Stroll past us, or into the shops.

They greet the shopkeepers and touch their hats or foreheads
to me. . . .
Some evening I shall not return to my people.

DEATH

I shall walk down the road;
I shall turn and feel upon my feet
The kisses of Death, like scented rain.
For Death is a black slave with little silver birds
Perched in a sleeping wreath upon his head.
He will tell me, his voice like jewels
Dropped into a satin bag,
How he has tip-toed after me down the road,
His heart made a dark whirlpool with longing for me.
Then he will graze me with his hands,
And I shall be one of the sleeping, silver birds
Between the cold waves of his hair, as he tip-toes on.

HILL-SIDE TREE

Like a drowsy, rain-browned saint,
You squat, and sometimes your voice,
In which the wind takes no part,
Is like mists of music wedding each other.
A drunken, odor-laced peddler is the morning wind.
He brings you golden-scarfed cities
Whose voices are swirls of bells burdened with summer;
And maidens whose hearts are galloping princes.
And you raise your branches to the sky,
With a whisper that holds the smile you cannot shape.

ADVICE TO A BLUE-BIRD

Who can make a delicate adventure
Of walking on the ground?
Who can make grass-blades
Arcades for pertly careless straying?
You alone, who skim against these leaves,
Turning all desire into light whips
Moulded by your deep blue wing-tips,
You who shrill your unconcern
Into the sternly antique sky.
You to whom all things
Hold an equal kiss of touch.

Mincing, wanton blue-bird,
Grimace at the hoofs of passing men.
You alone can lose yourself
Within a sky, and rob it of its blue!

Mary Carolyn Davies

Mary Carolyn Davies was born at Sprague, Washington, and was educated in the schools at and about Portland, Oregon. At college (the University of California) she won the Emily Chamberlin Cook prize for Poetry in 1912, being the first freshman to win it. In the same year she established another precedent by being the first woman to win the Bohemian Club prize. With the proceeds the young poet went to New York, arriving with the remnants of her fortune—four dollars and eighty-five cents. The long struggle with the city began. Miss Davies wrote short stories, two serials, reams of sentimental verses—"anything to keep alive."

Her work divides itself into two distinct classes: the hackwork which she does for a living and the genuine poetry which she creates for its own sake. Her first volume, *The Drums in Our Street* (1918), was a mixture of loud bombast and quiet beauty, of blatant war-verse and unaffected lyrics. *Youth Riding* (1919), al-

though as uneven as its predecessor, is simpler and surer. The poems in *vers libre* are clearly musical, and her eight-line lyrics are wistful and gracious.

THE DAY BEFORE APRIL[1]

The day before April,
  Alone, alone,
I walked in the woods
  And I sat on a stone.

I sat on a broad stone
  And sang to the birds.
The tune was God's making
  But I made the words.

THE APPLE TREE SAID:[1]

My apples are heavy upon me.
  It was the Spring;
And proud was I of my petals,
  Nor dreamed this thing:

That joy could grow to a burden,
  Or beauty could be
Changed from snow-light to heavy
  To humble me.

Winifred Welles

Winifred Welles was born at Norwich Town, Connecticut, January 26, 1893, and educated in the vicinity of her home.

Her delicately fashioned lyrics are the distinguishing feature of *The Hesitant Heart* (1920). This first volume, so appropriately

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company. From *Youth Riding* by Mary Carolyn Davies.

named, has a frank tenderness that never grows maudlin, a wistful questioning that never forgets to sing.

Since the publication of her volume Miss Welles has become one of the editors of *The Measure,* in which some of the best of her work has appeared. Her standards, it is evident, have become higher; her verse has grown surer and keener-edged. There is a particular finesse in such recent and as yet uncollected poems as "Harvest Dust" and "Actual Willow."

FROM A CHINESE VASE

Roaming the lonely garden, he and I
Pursue each other to the fountain's brim,
And there grow quiet—woman and butterfly—
The frail clouds beckon me, the flowers tempt him.

My thoughts are rose-like, beautiful and bright,
Folded precise as petals are, and wings
Uplift my dreaming suddenly in flight,
And fill my soul with jagged colorings.

The waters tangle like a woman's hair
Above the dim reflection of a face—
He thinks those are his own lips laughing there,
His own breasts curving under silk and lace.

How shall we know our real selves, he and I,
Which is the woman, which the butterfly?

LOVE SONG FROM NEW ENGLAND

In every solemn tree the wind
  Has rung a little lonesome bell,
As sweet and clear, as cool and kind
  As my voice bidding you farewell.

This is an hour that gods have loved
To snatch with bare, bright hands and hold.
Mine, with a gesture, grey and gloved,
Dismiss it from me in the cold.

Closely as some dark-shuttered house
I keep my light. How should you know,
That, as you turn beneath brown boughs,
My heart is breaking in the snow?

ACTUAL WILLOW

Once when I looked at willows, I would say,
"Thin-fingered women are underneath that hair!"
Or, at the close of a quieter day,
A flock of tall birds would seem standing there
On single legs, heads tucked in for the night
Under gray-green plumage—
"Willow, willow is the note
If roots turn claws, and boughs go up in flight!"
Or, "A river-woman with a long white throat
Will come if I call 'Willow!' "
So I would say
When I looked at willows once—But today,
The actual willow, the fact of a tree
Seems fanciful and beautiful enough for me.

HARVEST DUST

The road is burnt to dust, like more dust meadow rue
Smokes in the meadow. Berries are balanced to fall
At a cowbell's echo. Apples will soon be over, nothing is left to do
For the trees but to crook their elbows on the wall.

In the farmhouse doorway a woman husking corn
  Droops to where, softer than children's hair, a yellow heap
Of the silk fondles her hand. Under her eyes her face is as worn
  As the stone steps where she sits and has fallen asleep.

What is it all for? Why must the earth crack
  Over and over beneath this searing breath?
Only that apples be amber and berries black,
  And women content and wearied unto death.

Herbert S. Gorman

Herbert S. Gorman was born at Springfield, Massachusetts, January 1, 1893. After attending the Technical High School he became an actor for two seasons, deserting the stage for the newspaper. He became assistant literary and dramatic editor of the Springfield *Union,* reporter on the New York *Sun* and reviewer for the New York *Post, The Freeman* and other journals.

His first book, *The Fool of Love* (1920), shows, beyond an indebtedness to E. A. Robinson, a keen talent and fresh personality. The best of these verses were reprinted with many new ones in *The Barcarole of James Smith and Other Poems* (1922). Gorman had read his Eliot to good purpose, but his own bent kept him from mere imitation. Meanwhile, he had attracted attention as a critic through his reviews in *The New York Times* and elsewhere, his first extended critical work appearing in 1924: *James Joyce, His First Forty Years.* Having steeped himself in the idiom of *Ulysses,* it is not unnatural that Gorman's novel should reflect the kaleidoscopic manner of Joyce. But *Gold by Gold* (1925) unfolds its own legend, a problem which is obviously the poet's: an artist's search for adjustment and his failure to find it in New York.

THE FANATIC

Well, here it is: you call for me: I come,
  But with an eagerness not quite my own;
Propelled by that decisive martyrdom
  That pleased the saints upon their faggot throne.

You see them smiling in the cruel flame
  That exquisitely licks their willing limbs,
And finding some sad pleasure in the game
  Not quite embodied in their lusty hymns.

And so I come: and though I go, be sure
  That I will come again to-morrow, too;
And, Love's fanatic, hasten to endure
  The littleness that is so great in you.

I am the weakling of that helpless strength
  That throws this broken body you despise
Before your carelessness, to find at length
  The faith that sleeps behind your faithless eyes.

John V. A. Weaver

John V. A. Weaver was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1893. While still a child he went to live in Chicago where he was educated (he also attended Hamilton College and Harvard), and became a member of the staff of *The Chicago Daily News.* He left that paper in 1917 to enter the army, serving as a second lieutenant during the war. In 1920 he was appointed literary editor of *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle,* resigning from that position in 1924 to devote himself entirely to literature.

Besides his verse Weaver has published one prose volume, *Margey Wins the Game* (1922), a work which his friends are happy to forget. His most characteristic efforts are in the two volumes: *In American* (1921), and *Finders* (1923). In these two volumes current slang is used not only with a clever effectiveness

but with new poetic values. Subway-guards, shopgirls, "sporty" freshmen, and the whole race of "hard-boiled" gum-chewers find their laureate in Weaver's alert lines. Weaver was by no means the first to experiment in the use of the vernacular as a medium for rhyme. From a technical standpoint, his feat of writing sonnets in the American vulgate (*vide* "Ghost") is neither so much of a novelty nor a *tour de force* as *The Love Sonnets of a Hoodlum*, written by Wallace Irwin in 1901. But Weaver has introduced new ideas as well as new vivacities of speech; the background of a jazz civilization is implicit in his rhymed stories which, seldom humorous, are almost solemn and not infrequently sentimental.

In *Finders* and the later work Weaver achieves a more detached attitude; the slang is not so prevalent, the emotion less soft. Whatever his limitations, there can be no doubt about the documentary value of his serious and often successful experiments.

GHOST

I'm comin' back and haunt you, don't you fret.
  What if I get as far as Hell away?
  They's things of me that just can't help but stay—
Whether I want or not, you can't forget.

Just when you think you got me wiped out clear,
  Some bird that's singin'—moonlight on a hill—
  Some lovely thing'll hurt like it would kill,
And you'll hear somethin' whisperin', "He's here!"

And when somebody holds you closte, like this,
  And you start in to feel your pulses race,
  The face that's pressin' yours'll be my face;
My lips'll be the ones your lips'll kiss.

Don't cry . . . Which do you think it'll hurt most?—
Oh, God! You think I want to be a ghost? . . .

TWO WAYS

Oncet in the Museum
  We seen a little rose
In a jar of alcohol—
  You turns up your nose:
"That's the way people think
  Love ought to be—
Last forever! Pickled roses!
  None o' that for me!"

That night was fireworks
  Out to Riverview—
Gold and red and purple
  Bustin' over you.
"Beautiful!" you says then,
  "That's how love should be!
Burn wild and die quick—
  That's the love for me!"

Now you're gone for good . . . Say,
Wasn't they no other way?

Elizabeth J. Coatsworth

Elizabeth J. Coatsworth was born in 1893 in Buffalo, New York. After extended travels she returned to America, where she divides her time between California and an old house overlooking the harbor of Hingham, Massachusetts.

Miss Coatsworth made her début with *Fox Footprints* (1921), a group of images and studies in the Oriental mood. Coming at a time when the country was surfeited with adaptations from the Chinese and paraphrases from the Japanese, Miss Coatsworth's volume was treated merely as another set of charming echoes. But, beneath the exotic influences, there was a vein of fresh imagery, a native fancy which was no more Eastern than Miss Coastworth's own spirit.

Atlas and Beyond (1924), was a far more original piece of

work. Although it, too, finds its subjects over-seas, there is nothing of the usual travel-book flavor in any poem, the section entitled "Italy" being particularly delightful because of its mixture of grace and irony. But it is her subsequent verses which disclose Miss Coatsworth as one of the most interesting of the younger lyricists. In the group of four of her most recent poems which are quoted here and which have not yet been collected in any of her volumes, Miss Coatsworth reveals a sharper idiom, a tighter technique which is as effective in *macabre* ballads as it is in such homely pictures as those of domestic animals pathetically gazing at a bill-postered barn or an old mare suckling a mule colt. It is a deft hand that Miss Coatsworth turns from the fashioning of the bizarre to the quaint or the suddenly poignant.

THE OLD MARE

Gray despair
Was on the old mare,
Grass turned bitter,
Sky a-glare,
And gnats like thoughts,
And thoughts like gnats,
Everywhere.

Her underlip
Hung pendulous wide,
Her ears twitched back,
Her dusty hide
Heaved with her heavy breathing
And her eyes rolled ominously
To one side.

The mule colt lay
In trampled grass,
Slick-tailed, long-eared,
Bespeaking the ass
Carried so long in her body,
Born in travail and sweat—
Alien, alas.

But staggering
To unsteady feet
The mule colt fumbles
An unknown teat;
And the old mare relaxes and sighs,
Finding any motherhood
Most sweet.

DANIEL WEBSTER'S HORSES

If when the wind blows
Rattling the trees,
Clicking like skeletons'
Elbows and knees,

You hear along the road
Three horses pass—
Do not go near the dark
Cold window-glass.

If when the first snow lies
Whiter than bones
You see the mark of hoofs
Cut to the stones,

Hoofs of three horses
Going abreast—
Turn about, turn about,
A closed door is best!

Upright in the earth
Under the sod
They buried three horses
Bridled and shod,

Daniel Webster's horses—
He said as he grew old,
"Flesh, I loved riding,
Shall I not love it, cold?

"Shall I not love to ride
Bone astride bone,
When the cold wind blows
And snow covers stone?

"Bury them on their feet
With bridle and bit.
They were fine horses—
See their shoes fit."

THE CIRCUS-POSTERED BARN

When Dobbin and Robin, unharnessed from the plow,
Stamp smoking to their stalls,
They pass beneath white horses with long manes
Shining upon the walls,
White horses airily leaping through great hoops
Along applauding tracks
Or carrying princesses in rosy tights
Upon their backs.

And Daisy, Madge and Buttercup
Raise their soft eyes,
Where through the darkness of the web-hung stable
Hippopotami arise,
Shaking the water from their enormous shoulders
Floundering in savage mud,
Showing those muzzles huge enough to ponder
An epic cud.

And Tom beside a rat-hole in the boarding
Meets the still stare
Of eyes fiercer than his eyes and a large lithe body
Above him there—
Despondent grow the inmates of the barnyard;
Not one achieves
The super-powers of those super-mammals
Beneath the eaves!

PRETTY FUTILITY

Pretty Futility
Always declares
There's nothing so good
As a basket of pears,

Nothing so tranquil,
Nothing so sweet,
As eating ripe pears
In the quiet of heat.

She straightens her ruffles,
She smiles as she swings,
And when she has eaten
Futility sings.

Donald Davidson

Donald Davidson was born August 18, 1893, in Campbellsville, Tennessee, and was educated in his native state, receiving his B.A. and M.A. degrees at Vanderbilt University. The son of a school-teacher, he himself has been teaching for many years, first in high schools and later at Vanderbilt University as Assistant Professor of English. He is one of the group which founded *The Fugitive,* that curiously provocative little monthly which put Nashville on the literary map, and in his turn he has acted as editor of that magazine.

His first volume, *An Outland Piper,* was published in 1924. The diversity of its contents discloses, beneath a certain amount of echoing, a surplus of poetic energy. Although it is evident that Davidson is just "emerging," a fresh voice rises from many of the verses even when they are most derivative. And that voice has its own decided *timbre.* Since the publication of *An Outland Piper,* Davidson's lines have become more pointed, more nearly his own; the two poems reprinted here having appeared in *The Fugitive* and *The Measure* subsequent to his first volume. These most recent of his works carry with them more than the proverbial promise; although one detects evidences of Davidson's close acquaintance with John Crowe Ransom, they are instinct with a personality which is as whimsical as it is sensitive.

CROSS SECTION OF A LANDSCAPE

Here is the ice that girdles joyless ocean;
Water girdling a sphere of quiet slime;
Under it rock that has no light or motion
Save from the twirl, the eternal pantomime.

Under the rock is fire that dies by inches
Over the slag and ash of old decay.
Finally, what? The mathematician pinches
Space to a point, in his ponderable way.

But when I was a boy I searched from pole to pole
Of a gaudy globe, a rainbow colored ball,
Peeled the cover, unravelled the shiny whole
And was vexed to find at center nothing at all.

SPOKEN AT A CASTLE GATE

Before you touch the bolt that locks this gate
Be warned. There's no return where you are going.
A sword is tinder at the touch of fate
And crumbles in a way beyond your knowing.

Something I've heard, but something less I tell.
An old man knows, advises; young men smile,
Blow slug-horns, chink a latch, or clank a bell.
I've watched a many a one this weary while.

You can hear the nightingales, I won't deny.
They always sing for eager souls like you,
Perched on their boughs of possibility,
Most vaguely heard and still more vaguely true.

And they are more, perhaps, than mere tradition.
They must exist, though none come back to say
How they are feathered, or what rare nutrition
Keeps them, piping their sad peculiar lay.

Gardens there are, and Queens, no doubt, a-walking,
White blooms adrift on gold and marvellous hair.
Young men in murmurous dreams have heard them talking,
Leaped up, like you, and entered . . . vanished . . . where?

For all I know, the castle's just a dream,
A shadow piled to mask a dangerous ledge,
A fantasy blown from devils' lungs in steam,
Made permanent here, just on a chasm's edge,

Where you will plunge, forever, ever falling,
For infinite days and nights, a dark lump whirled
That hears or thinks it hears an old voice calling
Beyond the stars that cluster near this world;

A voice that follows you past endless night,
Familiar, yet not quite half-known or named,
The last and sorry remnant of delight
That you lived for, pursued, and touched, and claimed,

Even as you touch the bolt that locks this gate,
Smiling, with patience such as fits old men
Who prophesy. Ah, yes, what you create
Perhaps you'll find,—but never come back again.

F. R. McCreary

F. (Frederick) R. McCreary was born in Hartford, Connecticut, September 18th, 1893, and was educated at the Hartford public schools and Syracuse University. Between 1915 and 1919 McCreary worked at a dozen different occupations from grave-digging to advertising. He refuses to divulge the details, saying, "I must admit that I dislike those writers who have had all the plebeian odd jobs that I have—'the pick and shovel poets,' 'Verses by a Postman,' 'The Minstrel of the Cornfields,' etc.—and using it all for publicity."

Biography aside, McCreary made his first definite impression with "Before Winter," a rhapsodic but unrhetorical poem which appeared in *Voices*. It is one of the high moments in his volume, *The Northeast Corner* (1925), a splendidly illuminating set of images bound by an emotional unity. There is not a figure in the poem which is hackneyed nor, on the other hand, a single metaphor that is strained. It is a sure, deep-pitched voice which rises from these richly imaginative lines.

BEFORE WINTER

Long ago
The thunder went talking itself back to the dark hills,
Long ago
The green rows of peas went marching to a tiger lily sunset
While the crickets were sharpening their sickles
For the last of the late August moon.
Now hydrangea breasts hang full and low
To nourish more tenderly
Whatever of sunshine,
And the smell of bruised apples rises from the long rotted
grass.

Those who come from the fields
Come with their arms overflowing,
And there sounds from the ripe barns
The restless paw of heavy hoofs,
As the smoky wind and the dusk
Go stabling the horses of summer.

Did autumn come with white lips
Sucking at a black beach where no one could listen?
Did she come in a moment neither night time nor day
Whirling red laughter about her,
Long ribbons of ivy leaves, crimson?
Did you see her a gray-shawled woman of the twilight
Seated in a crotch of the hills,
Supping from a half-empty cup?
Or was she a mother, goldenrod tucked in her hair,
Singing to a sunflower poking his head through the corn?
O whoever she is
And however she came
I love her.

I looked hours and hours
Into long golden wells of Indian summer.
I saw my face at the bottom
And staring, remembering,
I suddenly left them
To look at the moon.

For autumn is the sound of a door softly closing at dusk,
Of an old man's voice
Counting over and again
The bushels he stores in the cellar,
The hush of a mother telling herself and her fire,
"Sarah, Thomas and Kate,
These are my children."

Then the curves of a scythe handle tempted my hands.
I grasped them,
And eagerly
I reaped for the last time.
April, June, and August,
I took what was left
And tied it in bundles for the winter.

The dark mistress of fall
Stands in her bare feet by the barn door
Holding a sickle in her hands.
I have helped her gather red apples,
Filling her apron,
And to slit the throats of fat swine;
I have helped her find the hoes and the rakes
And stacked them in a corner with the plow.
So she stands smiling,
Watching the swirl of the smoke mist,
The slow fall of leaves and the night.

I have helped her, but now I must turn from her, whispering,
"Mothers, knit and knit,
As you watch from your windows
The way of your children, their arms full of leaves,
Swaddling the rose bushes.
Barns, hunch your backs to the north,
For your lady is going with her sickle
To beat on the cool door of the snow wind.
Pools, swallow all the stars that you can,
For the ice will come
And cover you over."

September, October, and November,
They are fearless,
So now while the smoulder of leaves in the ditches
With tongues of flame and fire
Utters words of autumn prayer,

Let you, my neighbor, and I,
Go through the silence of the tented evening corn.
Let us light a fire at the edge of the fields and the woodside,
And let us stand round it watching the leap of the shadows,
Saying over and over to ourselves,
"This is our mother, our sky mother autumn,
Who brings shadows and death all about us,
Who fills our hearts with the glory of dying
And soothes us with the promise of snow."
We thrust our hands into the memory of the night
And grasping the hands of our earth fathers, earth mothers,
They who were loyal,
We stand till the last flare and flicker yields to the darkness,
And the darkness is peace.

Robert Nathan

Robert Nathan was born in New York City, January 2, 1894. He was educated at private schools there and in Switzerland, completing his studies at Harvard.

His first book, *Peter Kindred* (1919), was a mildly interesting novel which was succeeded by the far more original *Autumn* in 1921. *Autumn* established Nathan as one of the most individual of the younger writers. The delicately tinted prose as well as the interpolated rhymes revealed the fact that Nathan was a poet in disguise, and so it was no shock to his admirers when *Youth Grows Old,* a collection of verses, appeared within a few months after his successful prose. Although there is variety in these fifty pages, it is the mood of restrained poignance which Nathan best reproduces. But even the tenderest of his stanzas is saved from sentimentality by an ironically lifted eyebrow, a deprecating but resigned shrug. As a sequence, *Youth Grows Old* (1922) suffers from being pitched in too low a key; as individual songs, there is no denying the charm of at least a dozen of its lyrics, manifestly the work of one who is a composer as well as an author.

The Puppet Master (1923) and *Jonah* (1925) continue the strain

of fantastic irony. And if Nathan is, as some of his critics maintain, more a poet in his prose than in his rhymes, he is in both mediums a successful manipulator of the "dying fall" rendered in a not too cloying diminuendo.

AT THE SYMPHONY

(*César Franck, D Minor*)

The 'cellos, setting forth apart,
Grumbled and sang, and so the day
From the low beaches of my heart
Turned in tranquillity away.

And over weariness and doubt
Rose up the horns like bellied sails,
Like canvas of the soul flung out
To rising and orchestral gales;

Passed on and left irresolute
The ebony, the silver throat . . .

Low over clarinet and flute
Hung heaven upon a single note.

HE CONSIDERS THE ARROGANCE OF WEALTH

When the Lord was born of Mary,
Rich men, wise and wary,
Living in that period,
Divided up the earth with God.

But God, who never slumbers,
Has a poor head for numbers.
So the rich as we progress
Get more and God less.

Soon the dairy companies,
In unusual liveries,
Will attempt to furnish sunny
Heaven all its milk and honey.

PROEM

Man grows up
In quietness,
As he grows older
He talks less.

When he is old
He sits among
Gray grandfathers
And holds his tongue.

I'd rather sit
By a wine-shelf
And tell people
About myself.

Mark Van Doren

Mark Van Doren was born at Hope, Illinois, June 13, 1894, and was educated at the University of Illinois and at Columbia. Besides teaching English at Columbia, he is literary editor of *The Nation,* for which weekly he has reviewed most of the current poetry since 1920. (His brother, Carl Van Doren, had been his predecessor as literary editor on the same weekly.)

Besides his verses, he has published two volumes of criticism: *Henry David Thoreau, A Critical Study* (1916) and *The Poetry of John Dryden* (1920), excellent analytical appraisals.

Spring Thunder and Other Poems appeared in 1924. A casual glance through its pages reveals the fact that Van Doren has been influenced by Robert Frost. But he is no mere imitator. He, too, writes of homely bucolic things: pastorals on water wheels which need mending, a mountain house in December, the coming of al-

falfa, river snow, cows and dry meadows. His emotion, like Frost's, is restrained. But if neither his subjects nor his point of view are particularly individualized, his mellowness is his own, and the fine spirit which moves beneath the smooth contours of his verse personifies even the simplest of his quatrains.

FORMER BARN LOT

Once there was a fence here,
  And the grass came and tried—
Leaning from the pasture—
  To get inside.

But colt feet trampled it,
  Turning it brown;
Until the farmer moved
  And the fence fell down;

Then any bird saw,
  Under the wire,
Grass nibbling inward
  Like green fire.

IMMORTAL

The last thin acre of stalks that stood
  Was never the end of the wheat.
Always something fled to the wood,
  As if the field had feet.

In front of the sickle something rose—
  Mouse, or weasel, or hare;
We struck and struck, but our worst blows
  Dangled in the air.

Nothing could touch the little soul
  Of the grain. It ran to cover,
And nobody knew in what warm hole
  It slept till the winter was over,

And early seeds lay cold in the ground.
  Then—but nobody saw—
It burrowed back with never a sound,
  And awoke the thaw.

Raymond Holden

Raymond Holden was born in New York City in 1894 and educated at Princeton. He was, after several years of free-lancing, managing editor of *Travel Magazine* from 1923 to 1925.

His first volume, *Granite and Alabaster* (1922), is full of a packed intellectual strength; even the lyrics have philosophic undertones. But Holden's is no mere versified cerebration. His verse accomplishes that rare fusion of the object seen with the thing imagined. It is New England which Holden projects in this volume—a world of questioning skies and ghostly retrospects, of brooding uncertainties and somber speculations. This "wind-walled quietness," this freighting of lyrics with oblique philosophy, recalls the work of Robert Frost, to whom Holden is obviously indebted. There are moments when it is Frost's, rather than Holden's, voice which is heard in these poems. But, except for half a dozen pages, Holden maintains himself even when he is most under the spell of his teacher. His intonation often falters, but his intensity is his own.

The work which Holden has published subsequent to *Granite and Alabaster* is less reminiscent of Frost. The ideas as well as the technique are tighter and he has shaken himself free of idiomatic mimicry. One awaits his next book with unusual anticipation.

IF YOU ARE EVER OLD

You will not stay beside me long,
But if you are ever old,
If ever the rain in your hair is cold
Send me a shelterless song.
I shall come and take your breast
To my breast, quieter then—
Look into your eyes again
And kiss and wish them blessed;
Touch the autumn of your cheek
With my lips and speak
Words made of lengths of limb that lay
Together under sound and wind
And saw a tall night thinned
Against the unwelcome day.
And I shall bring a heart blown over
By shadow and left smooth and cool
And lay it upon a frozen pool
With your mouth and your hair to cover.

COLD NIGHT

I know the leaf, the bough
That falls and blows or breaks
Cares little for what wakes
Or sleeps a year from now.

I know the horn of the goose,
The thin dog's smoky bark,
Cries not against the dark
To shake its fingers loose.

I was as sure as they—
Against whom none connives—
There were no precious lives
Until I went your way.

But for great strangeness then
Hung over body and mind,
I were content with wind
And winter's regimen;

I were as quiet as grass
Under that folded peace
Where cold and clustering geese
Blow at their watery brass.

Genevieve Taggard

Genevieve Taggard was born November 28, 1894, on an apple farm at Waitsburg, Washington. At the age of two she was taken by her parents to Hawaii, where she remained, with one brief interval, for the next eighteen years. She attended the University of California, edited the college literary magazine, and graduated in 1919. Two years later, in New York, with a group of other poets, she helped found *The Measure,* that journal of poetry which has been particularly hospitable to the modern lyric.

Her first volume, *For Eager Lovers,* was published in 1922. In spite of the banal title, Miss Taggard's lines are unaffected and her general statements have almost personal definiteness. It is always a sensitive artist—and a woman—speaking through such melodies as "The Enamel Girl," and "With Child," a difficult motif and a treatment which is both firm and delicate. The grave thoughts of "Married," the glitter of "Ice Age" and the hurt beauty of "Unacknowledged Dedications" are almost equally successful. But, strangely enough, it is not in these brief pieces that Miss Taggard is most distinguished. She happens to be a lyric poet whose lyrics are less remarkable than her longer designs.

Hawaiian Hilltop, a leaflet of poems about her childhood in the tropics, was published in 1923. It proved that Miss Taggard was at her best in the more extended lyric; such a poem as "Solar Myth" is more vivid, more richly delineated than the best of her shorter melodies. "Doomsday Morning," a hitherto unpublished example of Miss Taggard's most recent phase, shows that her power of imagination has lost neither magic nor music.

THE ENAMEL GIRL

Fearful of beauty, I always went
Timidly indifferent:

Dainty, hesitant, taking in
Just what was tiniest and thin;

Careful not to care
For burning beauty in blue air;

Wanting what my hand could touch—
That not too much;

Looking not to left or right
On a honey-silent night;

Fond of arts and trinkets, if
Imperishable and stiff

They never played me false, nor fell
Into fine dust. They lasted well.

They lasted till you came, and then
When you went, sufficed again.

But for you, they had been quite
All I needed for my sight.

You faded. I never knew
How to unfold as flowers do,

Or how to nourish anything
To make it grow. I wound a wing

With one caress; with one kiss
Break most fragile ecstasies . . .

Now terror touches me when I
Dream I am touching a butterfly.

SOLAR MYTH

(Maui, the dutiful son and great hero, yields to his mother's entreaty and adjusts the center of the universe to her convenience. The days are too short for drying tapa. He is persuaded to slow down the speed of the spider-sun with a lasso of sisal rope.)

The golden spider of the sky
Leaped from the crater's rim;
And all the winds of morning rose
And spread, and followed him.

The circle of the day swept out,
His vast and splendid path;
The purple sea spumed in the west
His humid evening bath.

Thrice twenty mighty legs he had,
And over earth there passed
Shadows daily whipping by,
Faster, faster, fast . . .

For daily did he wax more swift,
And daily did he run
The span of heaven to the sea,
A lusty, rebel sun.

Then Maui's mother came to him
With weight of household woes:
"I cannot get my tapa dry
Before the daylight goes.

"Mornings I rise and spread with care
My tapa on the grass;
Evenings I gather it again,
A damp and sodden mass."

Then Maui rose and climbed at night
The mountain. Dim and deep
Within the crater's bowl he saw
The sprawling sun asleep.

He looped his ropes, the mighty man,
He whirled his sisal cords;
They whistled like a hurricane
And cut the air like swords.

Up sprang the spider. Maui hurled
His lasso after him.
The spider fled. Great Maui stood
Firm on the mountain-rim.

The spider dipped and swerved and pulled,
But struggle as he might,
Around one-half his whirl of legs
The sisal ropes cut tight.

He broke them off, the mighty man,
He dropped them in the sea,
Where there had once been sixty legs
There now were thirty-three.

Maui counted them, and took
The pathway home; and came
Back to his mother, brooding,—strode
Like a lost man, and lame.

The tarnished spider of the sky
Limped slowly over heaven,
And with his going mourned and moaned
The missing twenty-seven.

On with a hollow voice he mourned,
Poured out his hollow woe;
Over, each day the sound of him
Bellowing, went below.

Maui saw the gulls swarm up
And scream and settle on
The carcass of the limping thing
That once had been the sun.

But still he thought at length to have
His mother satisfied.
"Can't you put back his legs again
Now all my tapa's dried?"

"The days are long and dull," she said,
"I loved to see them skim." . . .
Wearily the old sun shook
The black birds off of him.

DOOMSDAY MORNING

Deaf to God, who calls and walks
Until the earth aches with his tread
Summoning the sulky dead,
We'll wedge and stiffen under rocks
Or be mistaken for a stone,
And signal as children do, "Lie low,"
Wait and wait for God to go.

The risen will think we slumber on
Like slug-a-beds. When they have gone
Trouped up before the Judgment Throne
We in the vacant earth, alone,—
Abandoned by ambitious souls,
And deaf to God, who calls and walks
Like an engine overhead
Driving the disheveled dead,—
We will rise and crack the ground,
Tear the roots and heave the rocks,
And billow the surface where God walks,

And God will listen to the sound
And know that lovers are below
Working havoc, till they creep
Together, from their sundered sleep.

Then end, world! Let your final darkness fall!
And God may call . . . and call . . . and call.

Marjorie Meeker

Marjorie Meeker was born in Bradford, England, while her father was the American consul there. She came to the States when about five years old and was educated in this country. Since her childhood, she has spent much of her time travelling in Europe and has lived alternately in New York and Ohio. She is the wife of Shirley Wing, a Rhodes Scholar, and their home is in Worthington, a tiny village near Columbus, Ohio.

Although Marjorie Meeker is not a prolific writer, whatever she allows to be printed has a quiet distinction of utterance. Still a neophyte (the Young Poet's Prize, offered through *Poetry,* was awarded to her in 1924), she exhibits none of the fluttering syllables affected by so many of her contemporaries; instead of pretty agitations, she gives us a stripped vigor. Whether she writes a memorial sonnet on the tragic death of her brother, a lyric prayer, or a clear love song, her lines capture a strength which is no less steely for being supple.

Predictions are always dangerous. But it seems unlikely that Miss Meeker's gift will be spoiled. She shows little likelihood of yielding to affectations or mere shifting fashions in taste. Her first volume, *Color of Water,* is in preparation and will, in all probability, be published in 1925.

WHERE MY STEP FALTERS

Where my step falters,
  My fathers trod;
But I raze their altars,
  For my God,

At whose cruel
  Thrust I am learning—
I am fuel
  For his burning.

My brain is humming,
  My heart is dusk
With awe at his coming.
  I am the husk

Cast away
  For his leaping higher;
I am the gray
  Ash of his fire.

No one knows,
  And little it matters
Where the husk blows
  Or the ash scatters.

MEMORIAL SONNET

By many a saint and many a scholar led,
I devised dreams where death was so assailed
That grief became a source where beauty fed.
My dear, my dear . . . the reasoned dream has failed.
Let nobler hearts, or those who loved you less,
Become with sorrow beautiful and wise;
I only know, upon your nothingness
I stare with cold uncomprehending eyes.
Love cannot glorify the loss of love,
Nor loneliness exalt an empty room,
Nor any gracious solace lift above
The cold ironic shadow of a tomb
Whose simple breadth no fire of faith can span
By any pledge of any God or man.

NOW HERE IS LOVE . . .

Now here is love—and it is yours to wreathe
The circumstance with smiles more light than petals—
Love, a quick sword no pretty words can sheathe,
A shining blade of haughty tempered metals.
Now here is love—and if you can, deny
That it is sharp to hold, and swift and bright;
Say you can blunt the sure edge with a lie,
The edge of fire, the naked line of light!
Roses and kissing lips of lovers turn
From less and lesser sweetness into dust;
But love, a glittering weapon, still can burn
Keen and aware beneath the creeping rust.
Now here is love, precise and proud and hard:
Say if you will love shall not leave you scarred.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

Elizabeth Madox Roberts was born near Springfield, Kentucky, and attended the University of Chicago, where she took a degree in 1921. As an undergraduate she won the local Fisk Prize with a group of poems which later appeared in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. An amplification of these verses appeared as *Under the Tree* (1922) and critics were quick to recognize the unusually fresh accents in this first volume. *Under the Tree* spoke directly to the young, for it was written, not so much for children, but as a child—an alert and sensitive child—would write. The observation is precise, the reflections are candidly clear, the humor delicate and never simpering or archly beribboned. Here is a simplicity which is straightforward without being shrill or, as so many grown-up records of childhood are, mincing. The verse is graceful where grace commands the gesture, but Miss Roberts' unforced *naïveté* allows her to be gauche whenever awkwardness is natural.

Since this volume Miss Roberts has returned to her native state, spending much of her time studying the archaic English speech which is still spoken in the remote parts of Kentucky. "Orpheus,"

although written later than her first book, is a highly interesting use of her early idiom, localizing as well as vitalizing the old myth. "Stranger" is more definitely indigenous; it has something of the flavor of the *Lonesome Tunes* collected by Howard Brockway and Loraine Wyman. Concerning this poem, Miss Roberts writes, "In these verses I have used material from the old ballads—or suggestions from them, material which may be found abundantly in Kentucky, together with modern syncopation and a refrain designed to call up banjo notes."

THE SKY

I saw a shadow on the ground
And heard a bluejay going by;
A shadow went across the ground,
And I looked up and saw the sky.

It hung up on the poplar tree,
But while I looked it did not stay;
It gave a tiny sort of jerk
And moved a little bit away.

And farther on and farther on
It moved and never seemed to stop.
I think it must be tied with chains
And something pulls it from the top.

It never has come down again,
And every time I look to see,
The sky is always slipping back
And getting far away from me.

CHRISTMAS MORNING

If Bethlehem were here to-day,
Or this were very long ago,
There wouldn't be a winter time
Nor any cold or snow.

I'd run out through the garden gate,
And down along the pasture walk;
And off beside the cattle barns
I'd hear a kind of gentle talk.

I'd move the heavy iron chain
And pull away the wooden pin;
I'd push the door a little bit
And tiptoe very softly in.

The pigeons and the yellow hens
And all the cows would stand away;
Their eyes would open wide to see
A lady in the manger hay,
If this were very long ago
And Bethlehem were here to-day.

And Mother held my hand and smiled—
I mean the lady would—and she
Would take the woolly blankets off
Her little boy so I could see.

His shut-up eyes would be asleep,
And he would look just like our John,
And he would be all crumpled too,
And have a pinkish color on.

I'd watch his breath go in and out.
His little clothes would all be white.
I'd slip my finger in his hand
To feel how he could hold it tight.

And she would smile and say, "Take care,"
The mother, Mary, would, "Take care";
And I would kiss his little hand
And touch his hair.

While Mary put the blankets back
The gentle talk would soon begin.
And when I'd tiptoe softly out
I'd meet the wise men going in.

ORPHEUS

He could sing sweetly on a string.
He'd make the music curve around;
He'd make it tremble through the woods
And all the trees would leave the ground.

The tunes would walk on steps of air,
For in his hand a wire would sing;
The songs would fly like wild quick geese—
He could play sweetly on a string.

. . . . .

If Orpheus would come to-day,
Our trees would lean far out to hear,
And they would stretch limb after limb;
Then the ellum trees would leave the ground,
And the sycamores would follow him.

And the poplar tree and the locust tree
And the coffeeberry tree would come
And all the rows of osage thorns,
And then the little twisted plum.

He'd lead them off across the hill.
They'd flow like water toward his feet.
He'd walk through fields and turn in roads;
He'd bring them down our street.

And he'd go by the blacksmith shop,
And one would say, "Now who are these?—
I wonder who that fellow is,
And where he's going with the trees!"

"To the sawmill, likely," one would say,
"Oh, yes, the sawmill, I should think."
And then he'd cut the horse's hoof
And hammers would go *clink* and *clink*.

. . . . .

He could play sweetly on a wire.

And he would lean down near his lyre
To hear its songs unfold and wind,
And it would reach up toward his ear
To hear the music in his mind.

And when the road turned by the kiln,
Then Orpheus would happen to see
The little plum and the sycamore
And the poplar tree and the chinaberry tree,

And all the rows of osage thorns—
When he happened once to look—
He'd see them coming after him . . .
Three birches, and he'd see the oak.

And he would lead them back again.
He'd bring each one to its own ground.
He'd bring each to its growing-place
And set them back with sound and sound.

He'd fit them in with whispered chords,
And tap them down with humming words.

STRANGER

When Polly lived back in the old deep woods,
Sing, sing, sing and howdy, howdy-o!
Nobody ever went by her door,
Tum a-tum tum and danky, danky-o!

Valentine worked all day in the brush,
He grubbed out stumps and he chopped with his axe,
He chopped a clear road up out of the branch;
Their wheels made all the tracks.

And all they could see out doors were the trees,
And all the night they could hear the wolves go;
But one cold time when the dark came on
A man's voice said, "Hello, there, hello!"

He stood away by the black oak tree
When they opened the door in the halfway light;
He stood away by the buttonwood stump,
And Valentine said, "Won't you stay all night?"

He sat by the fire and warmed his bones.
He had something hidden down deep in a sack,
And Polly watched close while she baked her pones;
He felt of it once when she turned her back—
Polly had a fear of his sack.

Nobody lived this way or there,
And the night came down and the woods came dark,
A thin man sat by the fire that night,
And the cabin pane was one red spark.

He took the something out of his sack,
When the candle dimmed and the logs fell low,
It was something dark, as Polly could see,
Sing, sing, sing and howdy, howdy-o!

He held it up against his chest,
And the logs came bright with a fresh new glow,
And it was a fiddle that was on his breast,
Tum tum-a and danky, danky-o!

He played one tune and one tune more;
He played five tunes all in a long row.
The logs never heard any songs before.
Sing, sing, sing and howdy, howdy-o!

The tunes lay down like drowsy cats;
They tumbled over rocks where the waterfalls go;
They twinkled in the sun like little June gnats;
Tum a-tum tum and danky dee-o!

The stumps stood back in Valentine's mind;
The wolves went back so Polly couldn't see;
She forgot how they howled and forgot how they whined.
Tum tum a-tum and danky-dee!

The tunes flew by like wild quick geese,
Sing, sing, sing and howdy howdy-o!
And Polly said, "That's a right good piece."
Tum tum tum and danky danky-o!
Tum a-tum tum and danky dee-o!

Marion Strobel

Marion Strobel was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1895 and became Associate Editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* in 1921. Besides her principal work, she has published several short stories which, though without importance, display a certain grace of writing.

Her first volume, *Once in a Blue Moon,* was published in 1925. It is a mixed collection in which the execution is as varied as the poet's moods. Following pages which are emotionally as well as technically weak, there are passages in which the line and mood have a bright transparency. In its lack of synthesis and integrated power *Once in a Blue Moon* is typically a first volume; but it is a first volume by one who has both a capricious gaiety and what, for lack of a more exact characterization, might be called a delicate defiance.

PITIFUL IN YOUR BRAVERY

Pitiful in your bravery, you stand
Shielding him. Oh, but you are young! You give
Yourself as heather to a waste of land,
And turn the barren soil in which you live
To beauty. . . . You, who valiantly blow
Your youth across his shriveled years, and come
With your fierce pride, and at the last will go
With head unbowed, eyes dark with scorn, like some
Diana who has run and lost the race
Yet found the running sweet— O you, as slim
And tireless as Time, with your child's face
And timid hands, why have you chosen him
To shield?—to love? Why must you be so dull
And steadfast in your youth? . . . and beautiful!

THE TRAGIC FEW

We hold bright pennies in our hand,
We pay to hear the penny band,
We laugh and joke and listen well,
And all we hear we tell.

Only we do not dare to beat
A cymbal or a little drum;
Only we dare not come
Too near to all the shouting crowd,
Or sing too loud.

We are the tragic few
Who smile and greet
Each other when we meet,
Cry and kiss each other
When we die . . .

Oh, but we hold
Avidly to the accustomed mold!

We who are of the earth,
Who dare not fling our yellow pennies high—
We who buy mirth
And pay to hear the penny band,
We cannot understand.

Babette Deutsch

Babette Deutsch, one of the most promising of the younger poet-critics, was born September 22, 1895, in New York City. She received her B.A. at Barnard College in 1917, doing subsequent work at the new School for Social Research.

Banners (1919) has a rich emotional content, the expression of a high-strung, apperceptive nature. *Honey out of the Rock* (1925) is a less unified but scarcely less sensitive volume; few of the pages lack the eager seriousness which characterize Miss Deutsch's writing.

In collaboration with her husband, Avrahm Yarmolinsky, she has published two anthologies: *Modern Russian Poetry* (1921) and *Contemporary German Poetry* (1923).

THE DEATH OF A CHILD[1]

Are you at ease now,
Do you suck content
From death's dark nipple between your wan lips?
Now that the fever of the day is spent
And anguish slips
From the small limbs,
And they lie lapped in rest,
The young head pillowed soft upon that indurate breast.
No, you are quiet,

[1] From *Banners* by Babette Deutsch. Copyright, 1919. George H. Doran Co., Publishers.

And forever,
Tho for us the silence is so loud with tears,
Wherein we hear the dreadful-footed years
Echoing, but your quick laughter never,
Never your stumbling run, your sudden face
Thrust in bright scorn upon our solemn fears.
Now the dark mother holds you close. . . . O, you
We loved so,
How you lie,
So strangely still, unmoved so utterly
Dear yet, but, oh, a little alien too.

IN A MUSEUM

Here stillness sounds like echoes in a tomb.
The light falls cold upon these antique toys
Whereby men sought to turn the scales of doom:
Jade gods, a ritual of rigid boys.
Warm blood was spent for this unwindowed stone
Tinct with the painted pleasures of the dead;
For secrets of unwithering flesh and bone—
With these old Egypt's night was comforted.

We lean upon the glass, our curious eyes
Staring at death, three thousand years remote.
And vanity, the worm that never dies,
Feeds on your silver ring and Pharaoh's coat.
And are these heartbeats, then, less perilous?
Since death is close, and death is death for us.

Alter Brody

Alter Brody was born at Kartúshkiya-Beróza, Province of Grodno, Russia, November 1, 1895. He came to New York City at the age of eight and, after a cursory schooling, wrote transla-

tions for certain Jewish and American newspapers. His first poems appeared in *The Seven Arts* in 1916-17.

In *A Family Album* (1918) one sees the impress of a tense and original mind, of imagination that is fed by strengthening fact, of sight that is sharpened by insight. Many of Brody's lines are uncouth and awkward; what music he achieves is mostly fortuitous. And yet his pages are filled with a picturesque honesty and uncompromising beauty. Much of this work is an interpretation of the modern world against a background of old dreams: young America seen through the eyes of old Russia.

A CITY PARK

Timidly
Against a background of brick tenements
Some trees spread their branches
Skyward.
They are thin and sapless,
They are bent and weary—
Tamed with captivity;
And they huddle behind the fence
Swaying helplessly before the wind,
Forward and backward,
Like a group of panicky deer
Caught in a cage.

GHETTO TWILIGHT

An infinite weariness comes into the faces of the old
tenements,
As they stand massed together on the block,
Tall and thoughtfully silent,
In the enveloping twilight.
Pensively,
They eye each other across the street,
Through their dim windows—
With a sad recognizing stare;

Watching the red glow fading in the distance,
At the end of the street
Behind the black church spires;
Watching the vague sky lowering overhead,
Purple with clouds of colored smoke
From the extinguished sunset;
Watching the tired faces coming home from work—
Like dry-breasted hags
Welcoming their children to their withered arms.

Louis Ginsberg

Louis Ginsberg was born October 1, 1896, at Newark, New Jersey, where he still lives. He was educated at Rutgers College and received his M.A. at Columbia University, 1924. Since 1918 he has been teaching in the high schools of New Jersey and was, for a while, editor of a book page on *The Newark Ledger.*

His volume, *The Attic of the Past* (1920), is frankly immature. But, half-buried beneath juvenile echoes, there are several lyrics which seem to promise more than mere smooth imitation. Ginsberg's recent work begins to fulfil this promise. Obviously influenced by the brightly colored simplicities of Lizette Woodworth Reese, Ginsberg has the gift of song. And if the music is not entirely his own, at least he knows how it should be sung.

A QUIET STREET AFTER RAIN

Glittering keen, all things appear
Clairvoyant, carved, and crystal-clear.
Happy to watch the raindrops cease,
Houses are honeycombed with peace;
And dazzling with a blazing show,
Windows are pelting suns below.
Colors are ambushing the sense
With silent, flaming eloquence,
While every front-yard lawn is seen
Twinkling a myriad tongues of green.

Marvelous, too, it is to see
A rose-bud dipped in deity!
Nearby a spider has begun
Upon a fence to thread the sun.
The street is hushed, though far off steals
The powdery, crumbling sound of wheels . . .
Till Time, who loiters by to scrawl
A warning on a garden wall,
Lingers to watch in strange amaze
How quiet loveliness can blaze—
How immortality can be
Familiar as a fence or tree!

E. E. Cummings

E. E. (Edward Estlin) Cummings, born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1896, first attracted considerable attention by his curiously punctuated and even more strangely spaced poems in *The Dial.* What was most pronounced in his experiments was an eccentricity of pattern intended to accentuate a manifestly startling idiom. Because of these superficial oddities, Cummings was soon attacked by the orthodox as a literary nihilist and hailed by his misled admirers as a new leader of "the left wing." Cummings received, in fact, almost every sort of criticism except a detached one.

An unpartisan appraisal reveals several facts. First, Cummings is no more radical than any poetic experimenter who, attempting certain verbal effects, commits errors in emphasis and proportion. His preoccupation with typographical design has often tricked him; much of his work suffers because of his distortions and that part of it which succeeds is successful in spite of, and not because of, its form. Second, he seems utterly incapable of self-criticism; his work, whether in an eruptive or quiet vein, has both the verve and the brashness of adolescence. It is evident that Cummings is extremely fecund, and so it is not strange that his first book, *Tulips and Chimneys* (1923), is a jumble of imaginative exuberance, cool precision and boyish affectations. His is a mind which is, in quick succession, lyrical, fantastic, grotesque, pathetic, savage. His distorted punctuation is significant of his æsthetic im-

maturity. His breaking up of words which have an integrity only as long as they are joined, and his denoting the first person singular with a small i, fail to achieve either emphasis or modesty. In destroying what are usually essentially simple patterns, Cummings does not provoke the reader to anything more than irritation. As has been implied, beneath his surface eccentricities which are responsible for his notoriety, Cummings' emotions are not at all bizarre, often they are actually banal. Unstrangled by the malformed calligrams adapted from Apollinaire, one detects a clean and distinct voice. Cummings is, after all, not so far from orthodoxy; his couplets remain couplets, even though he wedges white paper between them, and his appealingly youthful catalog of his lady's charms loses nothing by appearing in a form as regular as Villon's.

Above all, this poet exhibits a genuine gift of fresh imagination. His is undoubtedly a rhetorical language, but the rhetoric of Cummings has as fine a swing as any since Swinburne. It would be a pity if the annoyance caused by Cummings' visual disorganizations were to render the reader deaf to phrases as persuasive as, "Thy fingers make early flowers of all things," "The bulge and nuzzle of the sea," "Thy mouth is a chord of crimson music," "Thy forehead is a flight of flowers," "In the street of the sky, night walks, scattering poems," "Thoughts more white than wool," "Spring comes—the lean and definite houses are troubled," "The sea through her blind miles of crumbling silence."

LVI Poems (1925) reveals the same mixture which marks his first volume. There is the same puzzle-picture typography, used in connection with an otherwise conventional verse, the same schoolboyish nose-thumbing side by side with grave tenderness. Yet here, in spite of the attitudinizing, is a genuine and often sentimental lyricist, even though the poet tries to disguise the fact by uttering his songs in a syncopated staccato, interrupting the syllables with the punctuation of a cracked tambourine.

"WHEN GOD LETS MY BODY BE"

when god lets my body be

From each brave eye shall sprout a tree
fruit that dangles therefrom

the purpled world will dance upon
Between my lips which did sing

a rose shall beget the spring
that maidens whom passion wastes

will lay between their little breasts
My strong fingers beneath the snow

into strenuous birds shall go
my love walking in the grass

their wings will touch with her face
and all the while shall my heart be

With the bulge and nuzzle of the sea

SUNSET

stinging
gold swarms
upon the spires
silver

chants the litanies the
great bells are ringing with rose
the lewd fat bells
and a tall

wind
is dragging
the
sea

with

dream

-S

IMPRESSION—IV

the hours rise up putting off stars and it is
dawn
into the street of the sky light walks scattering poems

on earth a candle is
extinguished the city
wakes
with a song upon her
mouth having death in her eyes

and it is dawn
the world
goes forth to murder dreams. . . .

i see in the street where strong
men are digging bread
and i see the brutal faces of
people contented hideous hopeless cruel happy

and it is day,

in the mirror
i see a frail
man
dreaming
dreams
dreams in the mirror

and it
is dusk on earth

a candle is lighted
and it is dark.
the people are in their houses
the frail man is in his bed
the city

sleeps with death upon her mouth having a song in her eyes
the hours descend,
putting on stars. . . .

in the street of the sky night walks scattering poems

Louise Bogan

Louise Bogan was born August 11, 1897, in Livermore Falls, Maine, and was educated in country schools throughout New England and at the Girls' Latin School in Boston. Except for a six months' period in Europe she has lived in New York since 1919.

Body of This Death (1923) is one of the most brilliant first books of the last few years. The accent is not new; we have already heard it more crisply in Elinor Wylie's precise syllables. But if Miss Bogan lacks her forerunner's dazzling craftsmanship, she also achieves effects in a technique not unworthy of her subtlety. There are less than thirty poems in her exquisitely printed volume and only two of them cover more than a page. Yet every verse gives evidence of a mind which is as sensitized as her eye is sharp, an intellect which, for all its burden of thought, expresses itself best in the lyrics. The longer blank verse is only moderately interesting compared with such a vivid screen as "Decoration" or so cool and chiselled a piece as "Statue and Birds." Not many of her contemporaries have surpassed the finesse of these—few indeed have equalled it—while the bright contempt of "Women" and the frozen imagery in "Medusa" seem destined for more than contemporary applause.

MEDUSA

I had come to the house, in a cave of trees,
Facing a sheer sky.
Everything moved,—a bell hung ready to strike,
Sun and reflection wheeled by.

When the bare eyes were before me
And the hissing hair,
Held up at a window, seen through a door.
The stiff bald eyes, the serpents on the forehead
Formed in the air.

This is a dead scene forever now.
Nothing will ever stir.
The end will never brighten it more than this,
Nor the rain blur.

The water will always fall, and will not fall,
And the tipped bell make no sound.
The grass will always be growing for hay
Deep on the ground.

And I shall stand here like a shadow
Under the great balanced day,
My eyes on the yellow dust that was lifting in the wind,
And does not drift away.

WOMEN

Women have no wilderness in them,
They are provident instead,
Content in the tight hot cell of their hearts
To eat dusty bread.

They do not see cattle cropping red winter grass,
They do not hear
Snow water going down under culverts
Shallow and clear.

They wait, when they should turn to journeys,
They stiffen, when they should bend.
They use against themselves that benevolence
To which no man is friend.

They cannot think of so many crops to a field
Or of clean wood cleft by an axe.
Their love is an eager meaninglessness
Too tense, or too lax.

They hear in every whisper that speaks to them
A shout and a cry.
As like as not, when they take life over their door-sills
They should let it go by.

DECORATION

A macaw preens upon a branch outspread
With jewelry of seed. He's deaf and mute.
The sky behind him splits like gorgeous fruit
And claw-like leaves clutch light till it has bled.
The raw diagonal bounty of his wings
Scrapes on the eye color too chafed. He beats
A flattered tail out against gauzy heats;
He has the frustrate look of cheated kings.
And all the simple evening passes by:
A gillyflower spans its little height
And lovers with their mouths press out their grief.
The bird fans wide his striped regality
Prismatic, while against a sky breath-white
A crystal tree lets fall a crystal leaf.

STATUE AND BIRDS

Here, in the withered arbor, like the arrested wind,
Straight sides, carven knees,
Stands the statue, with hands flung out in alarm
Or remonstrances.

Over the lintel sway the woven bracts of the vine
In a pattern of angles.

The quill of the fountain falters, woods rake on the sky
Their brusque tangles.

The birds walk by slowly, circling the marble girl,
The golden quails,
The pheasants closed up in their arrowy wings,
Dragging their sharp tails.

The inquietudes of the sap and of the blood are spent.
What is forsaken will rest.
But her heel is lifted,—she would flee,—the whistle of the birds
Fails on her breast.

THE ALCHEMIST

I burned my life that I might find
A passion wholly of the mind,
Thought divorced from eye and bone,
Ecstasy come to breath alone.
I broke my life to seek relief
From the flawed light of love and grief.

With mounting beat the utter fire
Charred existence and desire.
It died low, ceased its sudden thresh.
I had found unmysterious flesh—
Not the mind's avid substance—still
Passionate beyond the will.

Joseph Auslander

Joseph Auslander was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 19, 1897. His education was decidedly mixed: he attended St. Catherine's School in Philadelphia, the Eastern District High School in Brooklyn, Harvard University and The Sorbonne. In 1922 he became a teacher at Harvard and in 1924 his first volume,

Sunrise Trumpets, appeared with a foreword by Padraic Colum.

The outstanding feature of *Sunrise Trumpets* is its technique. Auslander is an adroit fashioner of polished phrases, of smoothly slipping terms of speech. The music which he employs is wholly traditional; he disdains none of the older properties no matter how often they have been repeated. His book is so full of wings, water and bird songs that the general effect is that of a cloying softness. It is, for the greater part, an exaggerated rhetoric on which he relies. But, if Auslander is a passionate lover rather than a critical connoisseur of words, his romantic and, it may be suspected, rather conscious intoxication scatters a profusion of lovely epithets and images. He hears a cricket "stitching the dark edge of dawn," a cock "rapping in four rickety words his challenge to the sluggard," a bell which "jargons like water dropping in a well." If his verse seems to force the emotion rather than to allow the emotion to direct it, one remembers poems like "Interval," "Dawn at the Rain's Edge," and bits of illumination like "the hawk-dark trees," "water torturing through frozen snow," "the sulky gradual querulous content of chickens puffed and blinky in the sun," "lone gulls blown about the sky," "the bronze rumor of bees," and

> Things too small for a name
> Moving through private tunnels down to their instant of flame.

As has been stated, much of this volume is frankly rhetorical. But fine words are surely no less important than prosaic parsnips.

Auslander's subsequent verse has grown cooler and sharper. His touch is no less delicate, but he does not attempt to make the strings quiver with a continual *vibrato.* A firmness, almost a toughness, has entered his work and readers of his second volume, *Cyclops' Eye,* will find a melodist who is no longer a poet of promise but one of possession. The long poem "Steel," with its stark accents, is proof of this.

INTERVAL

Water pulls nervously whispering satin across cool roots,
cold stones;
And a bird balances his soul on a song flash, a desperate
outcry:

These are the minor chords, the monotones;
  This the undefeated gesture against an armored sky.

The moment is metal; the sun crawling over it is a fly
  Head down on a bronze ceiling; the hot stillness drones:
And you go sliding through green sea shafts and I
  Am an old mountain warming his tired bones.

ELEGY

Fled is the swiftness of all the white-footed ones
Who had a great cry in them and the wrath of speed:
They are no more among us; they and their sons
Are dead indeed.

So the river mews twist in long loops over the river,
Wheeling and shifting with the wind's and the tide's shift,
And pass in a black night—and nothing is left but a shiver
To show they were swift.

Whenever I hear a gull's throat throb in a fog,
Watch the owl's velvet swoop, the high hawk's lonely paces,
I think of the heels of him who lies like a log
And his friends under turf and the rain creeping down on
    their faces

And my heart goes sick and the hell in my heart could break
To the edge of my eyes for the mates I shall not be knowing
Anywhere now though the ice booms loud in the lake
And the geese honk north again and the heron's going.

THE WORDS OF AGUR:

Gather the wind in your fist,
Bind the waters in a cloth,
Strap the moon to your wrist,
Stamp it out like a moth.

The lion, the greyhound, the goat
Step in the stirrups of the wind;
The spider spins a cool coat
And sleeps in the coat he spinned.

Though all your chains cannot keep
The moon and the moth and the hound,
In palaces of purple sleep
There also the spider is found.

ULYSSES IN AUTUMN

I, who knew Circe, have come back
To sink a furrow in the loam;
Left twilights bellowing and black
For the soft glow of home:
To hear instead of a guttural sea
The needles of Penelope.

Still in my heart the Trojan sack
Hisses; and Helen's beauty goes
Glimmering. . . . And I have come back
To drink the stale cup of repose—
I, who knew Circe, and the wine
That turns men grunting into swine.

Can I forget Achilles? Fly
For ever from Calypso's guile?
The roaring red pit of that Eye
Drown in some domestic smile?
Cluck at a sweaty plow, who led
The white-flanked stallions of Diomed?

No, for these nerves are iron yet,
And in these veins, this caverned breast,
Echoes the howling parapet;
The trumpets will not let me rest . . .

Think you Odysseus drowses so
Who still can bend the terrible bow.

The lotus voices call my blood
Implacable and rumorous:
All night there drums a ghostly thud
Of feet. . . . O young Telemachus,
Plead with your mother to release
My spirit fevered for the Fleece!

The trees are straining in the storm,
Spattering gold; and from the sea
The old tang creeps between the warm
Breath of her lovely flesh and me:
Each dank leaf dripping down in fire
Fuels the dream of Troy and Tyre.

I know it will be some little thing
Like wild geese in a streaming wedge
Severely beautiful; a string
Of bird-prints on the water's edge
That suddenly shall crack galley whips
And hurl me headlong to the ships!

Stephen Vincent Benet

Stephen Vincent Benet, the younger brother of William Rose Benet, was born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in July, 1898. He was educated in various parts of the country, graduating from Yale in 1919.

At seventeen he published a small book containing six dramatic portraits, *Five Men and Pompey* (1915), a remarkable set of monologues which, in spite of distinct traces of Browning and Alfred Noyes, was little short of astounding, coming from a schoolboy. In Benet's next volume, *Young Adventure* (1918), one hears something more than the speech of an infant prodigy; the precocious facility has developed into a keen and individual vigor.

Heavens and Earth (1920), the most representative collection,

has a greater imaginative sweep. Like his brother, the younger Benet is at his best in the decoratively grotesque; his fancy exults in running the scales between the whimsically bizarre and the lightly diabolic.

King David, which was published a few months after it won *The Nation's* Poetry Prize for 1923, is less Benet than usual; one feels that the judges should have awarded at least half the prize to Vachel Lindsay. Lately the young author has become too prolific to be self-critical: he has published several novels besides collaborating on two plays which flickered a few nights in New York. His work betrays haste; the poet is allowing his rhymes to determine—and often to blur—the course of his imagery. There are far better things in *Tiger Joy* (1925), a collection which is remarkable for two of the most vigorous and definitely American ballads of the generation.

RAIN AFTER A VAUDEVILLE SHOW

The last pose flickered, failed. The screen's dead white
Glared in a sudden flooding of harsh light
Stabbing the eyes; and as I stumbled out
The curtains rose. A fat girl with a pout
And legs like hams, began to sing "His Mother."
Gusts of bad air rose in a choking smother;
Smoke, the wet steam of clothes, the stench of plush,
Powder, cheap perfume, mingled in a rush.
I stepped into the lobby—and stood still,
Struck dumb by sudden beauty, body and will.
Cleanness and rapture—excellence made plain—
The storming, thrashing arrows of the rain!
Pouring and dripping on the roofs and rods,
Smelling of woods and hills and fresh-turned sods,
Black on the sidewalks, gray in the far sky,
Crashing on thirsty panes, on gutters dry,
Hurrying the crowd to shelter, making fair
The streets, the houses, and the heat-soaked air,—
Merciful, holy, charging, sweeping, flashing,
It smote the soul with a most iron clashing!

Like dragons' eyes the street-lamps suddenly gleamed,
Yellow and round and dim-low globes of flame.
And, scarce-perceived, the clouds' tall banners streamed.
Out of the petty wars, the daily shame,
Beauty strove suddenly, and rose, and flowered. . . .
I gripped my coat and plunged where awnings lowered.
Made one with hissing blackness, caught, embraced,
By splendor and by striving and swift haste—
Spring coming in with thunderings and strife—
I stamped the ground in the strong joy of life!

WINGED MAN

The moon, a sweeping scimitar, dipped in the stormy straits,
The dawn, a crimson cataract, burst through the eastern gates,
The cliffs were robed in scarlet, the sands were cinnabar,
Where first two men spread wings for flight and dared the hawk afar.

There stands the cunning workman, the crafty, past all praise,
The man who chained the Minotaur, the man who built the Maze.
His young son is beside him and the boy's face is a light,
A light of dawn and wonder and of valor infinite.

Their great vans beat the cloven air, like eagles they mount up,
Motes in the wine of morning, specks in a crystal cup,
And lest his wings should melt apace old Dædalus flies low,
But Icarus beats up, beats up, he goes where lightnings go.

He cares no more for warnings, he rushes through the sky,
Braving the crags of ether, daring the gods on high,
Black 'gainst the crimson sunset, gold over cloudy snows,
With all Adventure in his heart the first winged man arose.

Dropping gold, dropping gold, where the mists of morning
rolled,
On he kept his way undaunted, though his breaths were
stabs of cold,
Through the mystery of dawning that no mortal may behold.

Now he shouts, now he sings in the rapture of his wings,
And his great heart burns intenser with the strength of his
desire,
As he circles like a swallow, wheeling, flaming, gyre on gyre.

Gazing straight at the sun, half his pilgrimage is done,
And he staggers for a moment, hurries on, reels backward,
swerves
In a rain of scattered feathers as he falls in broken curves.

Icarus, Icarus, though the end is piteous,
Yet forever, yea forever, we shall see thee rising thus,
See the first supernal glory, not the ruin hideous.

You were Man, you who ran farther than our eyes can scan,
Man absurd, gigantic, eager for impossible Romance,
Overthrowing all Hell's legions with one warped and broken
lance.

On the highest steeps of Space he will have his dwelling-
place
In those far, terrific regions where the cold comes down
like Death
Gleams the red glint of his pinions, smokes the vapor of
his breath.

Floating downward, very clear, still the echoes reach the ear
Of a little tune he whistles and a little song he sings,
Mounting, mounting still, triumphant, on his torn and
broken wings!

George O'Neil was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1898, and has lived there and in New York all of his life. He is one of the youngest editors of *The Measure* and his contributions to this and other magazines are rarely without a neat definiteness of touch.

His book of first poems, *The Cobbler in Willow Street,* was published in 1919. Although the dominant note is one of tentative fantasy O'Neil communicates a distinctly personal feeling in many of the lines. His subsequent verse is somewhat sharper although by no means angular.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

Ah, God! To have a breast like that
To throw at day,
Thrust for the hands of dawn
To quiver and flare upon.

And a hook of gold to end you,
And a bloody flag sewn in your head,
And all yourself to arch,
And your soul a white cascade.

With yellow spirals,
Step, step, stalk,
And clutch reluctant loam,
Hard kernels and brown hens
In the brazen blue of noon.

Ah, God! Stab upward with your noise;
Tear at the sky.
With the day gone molten down his throat
And his spine a tilted flame,
What singer could not make one song
As fine as fire?

Léonie Adams was born in Brooklyn, New York, December 9, 1899. After a public school preparation she became a member of the class of 1922 at Barnard College, where she wrote her first published poems "in secret." While she was still an undergraduate, her remarkable "April Mortality" was printed in *The New Republic,* but, although this would have been sufficient stimulus for most young authors to rush into print, Miss Adams remained more reticent than ever and rarely submitted any of her verse for publication.

It was only through the persuasion of two or three of her friends that her volume, *Those Not Elect* (1925), was made ready for the press. The author's own evasion of "realism" is apparent in all of her poetry. The poems themselves are of two sorts: the younger and simpler verses, full of a shy ecstasy, and the later, more metaphysical expressions of a rare and not so easily communicable wonder. Without imitating the Elizabethans, Miss Adams has caught something of the quality of Webster, Donne and the earlier Skelton. But whatever her style, whether she is direct as in "April Mortality" or more difficult as in "Pity of the Heavens," her sensitivity makes even the most obscure passages a succession of splendid images. And there is no mistaking either her restraint or the beauty of her imaginative emotion. There is not a line in her work which is without suggestive distinction.

APRIL MORTALITY

Rebellion shook an ancient dust,
  And bones bleached dry of rottenness
Said: Heart, be bitter still, nor trust
  The earth, the sky, in their bright dress.

Heart, heart, dost thou not break to know
  This anguish thou wilt bear alone?
We sang of it an age ago,
  And traced it dimly upon stone.

With all the drifting race of men
  Thou also art begot to mourn
That she is crucified again,
  The lonely Beauty yet unborn.

And if thou dreamest to have won
  Some touch of her in permanence,
'Tis the old cheating of the sun,
  The intricate lovely play of sense.

Be bitter still, remember how
  Four petals, when a little breath
Of wind made stir the pear-tree bough,
  Blew delicately down to death.

HOME-COMING

When I stepped homeward to my hill
  Dusk went before with quiet tread;
The bare laced branches of the trees
  Were as a mist about its head.

Upon its leaf-brown breast, the rocks
  Like great gray sheep lay silent-wise;
Between the birch trees' gleaming arms
  The faint stars trembled in the skies.

The white brook met me half-way up
  And laughed as one that knew me well,
To whose more clear than crystal voice
  The frost had joined a crystal spell.

The skies lay like pale-watered deep.
  Dusk ran before me to its strand
And cloudily leaned forth to touch
  The moon's slow wonder with her hand.

THOUGHT'S END

I watched the hills drink the last color of light,
All shapes grow bright and wane on the pale air.
Till down the traitorous east there came the night,
And swept the circle of my seeing bare.
Its intimate beauty like a wanton's veil
Tore from the void as from an empty face.
I felt at being's rim all being fail,
And my one body pitted against space.
O heart more frightened than a wild bird's wings,
Beating at green, now is no fiery mark
Left on the quiet nothingness of things.
Be self no more against the flooding dark:
There thousandwise sown in that cloudy blot
Stars that are worlds look out and see you not.

DEATH AND THE LADY

Their bargain told again

Death to the Lady said
While she to dancing-measures still
Would move, while beauties on her lay,
Simply as dews the buds do fill,
Death said: "Stay!
Tell me, Lady,
If in your breast the lively breath
May flicker for a little space,
What ransom will you give to death,
Lady?" he said.
"O not one joy, O not one grace,
And what is your will to my will?
I can outwit parched fancies still."
To Death said the Lady.

Death to that Lady said,
When blood went numb and wearily,
"In innocency dear breath you drew,
And marrow and bloom you rendered me,"
She said: "True."
"How now, Lady?"
"My heart sucked up its sweet at will,
Whose scent when substance' sweet is past,
Is lovely still, is lovely still,
Death," she said.
"For bones' reprieve the dreams go last:
Soon, soon your flowery show did part,
But preciously I cull the heart,"
Death said to the Lady.

Death to that Lady said:
"Is then not all our bargain done?
Or why do you beckon me so fast
To chaffer for a skeleton
Flesh must cast,
Ghostly Lady?"
"For, Death, that I would have you drain
From my dead heart the blood that stands
So chilly in the withered vein.
And, Death," she said,
"Give my due bones into your hands."
"Beauties I claim at morning-prime,
But the lack-lustre in good time."
Death said to the Lady.

PITY OF THE HEAVENS

Light all day from heaven was streaming,
But the last hour gathered earth with light,
Seeping the darkened air with a blue color.
And now the stars from the lofty brow of the night
Regard the earth, regard the withering land;

And now fair snow comes dropping over her bosom,
Sky touching earth with a chaste hand.

Earth bears no more the print of her creatures' feet,
Dark breast, no more the glittering waters start;
The hare and the doe are uncherished in the wood,
She is numb, there is bitter armor on her heart.

But how profoundly would the heavens caress her,
With pity that hardly is reckoned from eye to eye,
And mouth on mouth is untold.
The amity of the skies has left their touch
So light, so pure, so cold.

O bosom carven upon the roses and pleasures,
Heaven cannot unlock your passions and your mirth,
But have you not perceived those eyes mournful and bright,
How you are cherished by the countenance of the skies,
Is it not much, O earth?

Countée Cullen

Countée Cullen was born in New York City in 1903, the son of the Reverend Frederick A. Cullen. He was educated in the New York public and high schools and New York University, being graduated with the class of 1925.

When *The Book of American Negro Poetry* was published in 1922, Cullen was still in his 'teens and his few verses were no more unusual than most youthful flights. Had the anthology been collected three years later, a selection from Cullen's work would have been one of its outstanding features. Beginning in 1924, poems by this hitherto unknown negro began appearing in various magazines; within a year his name had reached the smallest of literary circles. Although it is much too early to attempt a summary—even an appraisal of the work of a boy of twenty-two is impossible—certain qualities in his work are apparent: a firmness of execution, a boldness of style, and a decided gift of epigram. Cullen's first volume, *Color,* appeared late in 1925 and

disclosed a brilliance for which even his most determined admirers were not prepared, a brilliance which makes one willing to overlook the poet's influences.

SIMON THE CYRENIAN SPEAKS

He never spoke a word to me,
And yet he called my name.
He never gave a sign to see,
And yet I knew and came.

At first I said, "I will not bear
His cross upon my back—
He only seeks to place it there
Because my skin is black."

But He was dying for a dream,
And He was very meek;
And in His eyes there shone a gleam
Men journey far to seek.

It was Himself my pity bought;
I did for Christ alone
What all of Rome could not have wrought
With bruise of lash or stone.

THREE EPITAPHS

For My Grandmother

This lovely flower fell to seed.
Work gently, sun and rain—
She held it as her dying creed
That she would grow again.

For a Virgin Lady

For forty years I shunned the lust
Inherent in my clay:
Death only was so amorous
I let him have his way.

A Lady I Know

She thinks that even up in heaven
Her class lies late and snores,
While poor black cherubs rise at seven
To do celestial chores.

Roberta Teale Swartz

Roberta Teale Swartz was born in Brooklyn, New York, June 9, 1903. She began rhyming as a child, making up verses for her grandfather, who was her first poetic guide and critic. When Miss Swartz went to college, her gift was discovered while she was a sophomore. As an undergraduate, she won three of the most important prizes offered by various universities, Robert Frost and the present editor being two of the judges who selected her anonymous work from a score of others. Miss Swartz was graduated from Mount Holyoke with the class of 1925.

Miss Swartz's poetry is distinctly lyrical. Her occasional free verse has little charm beyond a certain quirk of intellect. This tricksy turn of thought is at its best in the more regular but informal verses, verses which are seldom without a half-defiant, half-questioning pucker. From this it should not be gathered that Miss Swartz's Muse is either light or flippant. There are grave accents throughout, but it is no spectacled seriousness with which she regards the world. A volume of poems, *Lilliput,* is in preparation and is one to which we may look with ususual anticipation.

PREOCCUPATION

And when I knew that dream was dead,
I did not grieve at all.
"God needs that dream for his own world," I said,
"He will with an immense precision
Concentrate on this my vision."

God was watching a meadow weed—
A long lank thing from a surface seed—
And with gigantic tenderness
Was willing it to grow, I guess.

At first I shouted, "God," I cried,
"My valuable dream has died!"
He did not even look aside.
So I went nearer. "God," I said,
"I suppose you *do* know my dream is dead?"

But God had placed a second seed—
Was thinking up another weed.

BABEL

With clay I shaped my yellow bricks
One after another.
We laid our bricks in the sun to burn,
I and my brother.

We knelt and labored with the rest
In the hot weather;
From music-lacking toil we made
A song together.

The words we smoothed as clay to fit.
We built, and sang.
The others listened—envied—learned,
Till the plain rang.

Up rose the city and the tower
That should be high;
We looked above until we ached.
We yelled: "The sky!"

And then bent over our slow bricks.
But the sun darkened.
Rumbles began. Oh, song I knew!
I stopped and harkened.

For murmurs gathered in the gloom,
And more and more
Gathered and grew and smothered song.
—What was this roar?

I seized my brother. "Save!" I cried
Through swollen din.
"Keep, keep those words, and the sweet sound
We set them in!"

He stared. I saw the widened eyes.
He shook his head.
He made strange mouths and shrilled at me
And turned, and fled.

My brother! And a flash lit up
Through the loud rain,
Lo, the whole host in flight, and here
The ruined plain.

O lips that were confused!—I seek
Your singing yet.
What if I know some note that you
Did not forget?

Hilda Conkling

Hilda Conkling was born at Catskill-on-Hudson, New York, October 8, 1910. The daughter of Grace Hazard Conkling (see page 261), she came to Northampton, Massachusetts, with her mother when she was three years old and has lived there since, a normal out-of-doors little girl.

Hilda began to write poems—or rather, to talk them—at the age of four. Since that time she has created more than two hundred little verses, many of them astonishing in exactness of phrase. Hilda "tells" her poem and her mother copies it down, arranges

the line-divisions and reads it to the child for correction. Conceding a half-conscious shaping by Mrs. Conkling, the quality which shines behind all of Hilda's facets of loveliness is a straightforward ingenuousness, a child-like but extraordinary fantasy.

Poems by a Little Girl (1920), published when Hilda was a little more than nine years old, is a detailed proof of this. Every poem bears its own stamp of unaffected originality; "Water," "Hay-Cock," and a dozen others are startling in their precision and a power of painting the familiar in unsuspected colors. This child not only sees, feels and hears with the concentration of a child-artist, she communicates the results of her perceptions with the sensitivity of an expert craftsman. She hears a chickadee talking

> The way smooth bright pebbles
> Drop into water.

Everything is vivid and sharply correct to her keen sight. The rooster's comb is "gay as a parade;" he has "pearl trinkets on his feet" and

> The short feathers smooth along his back
> Are the dark color of wet rocks,
> Or the rippled green of ships
> When I look at their sides through water.

Shoes of the Wind (1922) proves that her first volume was no mere *Wunderkind's* freak. Here again her vision is precise even when her imagination is most playful. She watches pigeons with "feet the color of new June strawberries," she observes a pink peony standing in a tall glass as "Queen Elizabeth in a ruff," lilies-of-the-valley are "bell-shaped moments clustered, doves of time." This clarity of epithet makes Hilda kin to the Imagists; Amy Lowell might have described a flight of pigeons in just such words as Hilda's: "A cool curving and sliding down the light."

It is impossible to guess how much of Hilda's gift will remain undisturbed by knowledge and the traditions which will accompany her growth. Now that she is old enough not to require the service of her mother as amanuensis, it will be doubly interesting to see what Hilda writes when she holds the pen in her own hands.

WATER

The world turns softly
Not to spill its lakes and rivers.
The water is held in its arms
And the sky is held in the water.
What is water,
That pours silver,
And can hold the sky?

HAY-COCK

This is another kind of sweetness
Shaped like a bee-hive:
This is the hive the bees have left,
It is from this clover-heap
They took away the honey
For the other hive!

THE OLD BRIDGE

The old bridge has a wrinkled face.
He bends his back
For us to go over.
He moans and weeps
But we do not hear.
Sorrow stands in his face
For the heavy weight and worry
Of people passing.
The trees drop their leaves into the water;
The sky nods to him.
The leaves float down like small ships
On the blue surface
Which is the sky.
He is not always sad:
He smiles to see the ships go down
And the little children
Playing on the river banks.

I KEEP WONDERING

I saw a mountain,
And he was like Wotan looking at himself in the water.
I saw a cockatoo,
And he was like sunset clouds.
Even leaves and little stones
Are different to my eyes sometimes.
I keep wondering through and through my heart
Where all the beautiful things in the world
Come from.
And while I wonder
They go on being beautiful.

Nathalia Crane

Nathalia Clara Ruth Crane, the most remarkable phenomenon since the days of Marjorie Fleming, was born in New York City August 11, 1913. Through her father she is descended from John and Priscilla Alden, Stephen Crane being a not distant kinsman; on her mother's side she inherits the varied gifts of the Abarbanels, that famous family of Spanish Jews which counts among its members poets, musicians and ministers of state.

Nathalia began to write when she was little more than eight years old. At the age of nine she sent some of her verses to *The New York Sun* and they were accepted wholly on their merit by Edmund Leamy, the poetry editor, Leamy having no idea that the lines were written by a child. Other verses of Nathalia's appeared in *The Sun* and it was not until a call in answer to a letter disclosed to Leamy's amazement that the writer was none other than a slender, candid and not at all self-conscious child.

Nathalia's first volume, *The Janitor's Boy,* appeared when its author was ten and a half, in 1924. It went rapidly through five editions, being one of the most discussed publications of the year. Some of the critics explained the work by insisting that the child was some sort of medium, an instrument unaware of what was played upon it; others scorned the fact that any child could have

written verses so smooth in execution and so remarkable in spiritual overtones. Whatever the source may be, whether the inspiration derives from the unconscious or some atavistic spark, the poetry speaks for itself, a firm and definite accomplishment.

The verse itself is sharply divided into two kinds: the light and genuinely childish jingle—the sort of thinking native to most children but which most of them are unable to compress into such facile rhyme—and the incredibly grave and cryptic poetry, studded with a wealth of brilliant imagery. Even in the first division there is a quality unusual to child verse; in such merry stanzas as "The Flathouse Roof," "Love," "Oh, Roger Jones" there is a sly sophistication which lifts these above many of Eugene Field's rhymes on similar themes. The turn of epigram is never lacking; even in her pattering syllables she speaks of "the tenseness of humiliating pain"; a visit to an ice-cream store leads her to conclude that she "could not stain romance with monetary fee"; an emotion which is suspiciously like humor leads her to write "The First Reformer" and to begin another poem:

> I linger on the flathouse roof, the moonlight is divine,
> But my heart is all a-flutter like the washing on the line.

The other division of Nathalia's work, which is no longer verse but indubitable poetry, reveals the fact that Nathalia has read much not only in books of legends but in the dictionary. This juvenile mystic is as fond of archaic words as Francis Thompson and she enjoys using a string of glistening alliterations to express some tremendous psychic fact. All her work is founded on some reality. But the fact rises from its foundations on an imaginative sweep which any poet might envy. The thought of the heavenly ones hankering for the world they have left suddenly assumes this form:

> A precious place is Paradise and none may know its worth,
> But Eden ever longeth for the knicknacks of the earth.
>
> The angels grow quite wistful over worldly things below;
> They hear the hurdy-gurdies in the Candle Maker's Row.
>
> They listen for the laughter from the attics of the earth;
> They lower pails from heaven's wall to catch the milkmaid's mirth.

Metaphors as startling as the last one abound in Nathalia's pages. She summons "birth-marked butterflies cruising across the mirrors of the skies"; she sends the humming-bird "pivoting on emptiness" across our vision like "a rainbow o'er a rambling waterfall"; her *alter ego* in Gobi solitudes sees "the tombs time left unlatched" and "wind-blown shrouds of sand"; she imagines Oriental bees sailing "in golden convoys to the mountains of the moon." She writes a poem to console a blind playmate to whom she has tried to picture the wonder of a Christmas tree. But the lines which result have little to do with the child and nothing with the actual event; what follows is a piece of musical philosophy in which the insight is nothing less than tremendous. "The Vestal" and "Destiny" are illuminations which would not be out of place in a volume of Emily Dickinson. It is a younger feminine Swinburne who speaks in "The Gossips." And from what origin sprang that curiously involved but amazing monologue, "My Husbands," with its occult divination:

> He showed me like a master
> That one rose makes a gown;
> That looking up to Heaven
> Is merely looking down.

It is not, it seems to me, particularly important where this verse comes from. What is important is that it is here.

THE BLIND GIRL

In the darkness, who would answer for the color of a rose,
Or the vestments of the May moth and the pilgrimage it goes.

In the darkness who would answer, in the darkness who would care,
If the odor of the roses and the wingèd things were there.

In the darkness who would cavil o'er the question of a line,
Since the darkness holds all loveliness beyond the mere design.

Oh, night, thy soothing prophecies companion all our ways,
Until releasing hands let fall the catalogue of days.

In the darkness, who would answer for the color of a rose,
Or the vestments of the May moth and the pilgrimage it goes?

In the darkness who would answer, in the darkness who would care,
If the odor of the roses and the wingèd things were there.

THE VESTAL

Once a pallid vestal
Doubted truth in blue;
Listed red as ruin,
Harried every hue;

Barricaded vision,
Garbed herself in sighs;
Ridiculed the birth marks
Of the butterflies.

Dormant and disdainful,
Never could she see
Why the golden powder
Decorates the bee;

Why a summer pasture
Lends itself to paint;
Why love unappareled
Still remains the saint.

Finally she faltered;
Saw at last, forsooth,
Every gaudy color
Is a bit of truth.

Then the gates were opened;
Miracles were seen;
That instructed damsel
Donned a gown of green;

Wore it in a churchyard,
All arrayed with care;
And a painted rainbow
Shone above her there.

THE GOSSIPS

The rosebud that grew by the settle
Bowed low to the gossiping thrusts;
The poet was praising the nettle,
The nettle that nobody trusts.

The pansies were painted in postures,
The poppies have stood on their toes;
But long before mention of Moses
Her rivals have flouted the rose.

Oh! Sweetness a-sway by the settle,
Be still on thy beautiful stem;
For love never clung to the nettle—
The nettle that burns to condemn.

Grieve not for a moment's defection,
Though pansies and poppies may pose,
For after a bit of reflection
The rover returns to the rose.

THE FIRST REFORMER

It was a primal twilight tense,
Heat swathed the steaming downs,
And suddenly a flower cried:
"Oh, let's take off our gowns."

No arrogance of modesty—
The time was all too hot;
The sap was pouring from the trees,
The pools began to clot;

A passionate poinsettia stripped
Herself of sarcenet green,
A lily shook her sindon off,
A rose her gabardine.

The honeysuckle cast her sheath,
Strove hard to hide a mole,
The poppy ripped her chemisette
And screamed: "I have a soul!"

Across the downs a humming bird
Came dipping through the bowers;
He pivoted on emptiness
To scrutinize the flowers.

But as he paused to clarify
Amazing visionings,
The perfumes drew him down unto
The loveliest of things.

Bewildered, the poinsettia blushed
And grabbed a bit of grass;
The honeysuckle held her breath,
The poppy sighed, "Alas."

The roses called him renegade,
The lilies shut their eyes.
Down rushed that ruby-throated wretch—
A sultan from the skies.

He wooed the daunted odalisques,
He kissed each downcast nude;
He whispered that an angel's robe
Is mostly attitude;

He sang of love's own liveries,
Of sunburn, tan and verve,
Of little Nordic freckles posed
To punctuate a curve;

He begged them not to gown again,
Caressed away their shame;
He was the first reformer crowned
With accidental fame.

THE THREE-CORNERED LOT

Said the farmer to his daughter: "When I die, as like as not,
I'll leave to you the title to the old three-cornered lot.

" 'Tis the vale beyond the pastures, never any good to me,
With the huckleberry bushes and the silver maple-tree.

"Fair scenery for song birds, but too small to cultivate;
Yet there's a wall around it, like a foolish man's estate."

Fell a blight upon the corn fields; stood an empty barn and cot;
The farmer's holdings dwindled to the old three-cornered lot.

He saw his home dismantled; learned that permanence, alas,
Is the portrait of a swallow painted on the shadow grass.

Came his daughter as a seeress, and she said: "As like as not,
I am giving back the title to the old three-cornered lot.

" 'Tis just a bit of scenery too sweet to cultivate,
Yet there's a wall around it, like a nobleman's estate;

"There are huckleberry bushes and a length of garden loam,
And stone walls of the foolish man wherewith to build a home."

DESTINY

The wind doth wander up and down,
  Forever seeking for a crown;
The rose, in stillness on a stem,
  Inherits love's own diadem.

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